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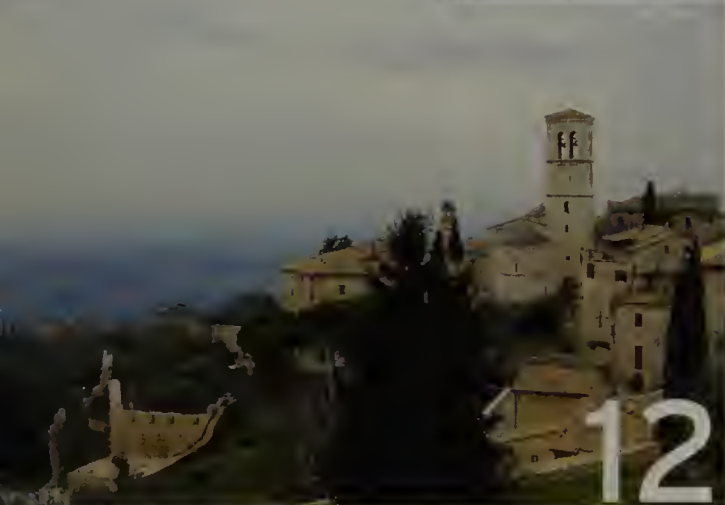


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coverstory



Feature Choose your own adventure by Karen Baker

Whether it's a trip halfway around the world or just a drive across town, any travel experience can be packed with excitement—and some surprising spiritual discoveries.



Photo essay

A cross history

by John Christman, S.S.S.

Canvassing the art world reveals many different visions of the crucifixion, each with its own unique view of Jesus' final hours.

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by Linda Monitello

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Globe-trotter

In the spring semester of my junior year, I was given the opportunity to study at Loyola University Chicago's John Felice Rome Center. What started as an opportunity to travel around Europe, practice my Italian, and eat nothing but pizza and cannoli for four months turned into a chance to explore my faith in the center of the Roman Catholic world.

During my last weekend getaway before returning to the United States, my friends and I traveled to Cinque Terre, a series of five coastal villages that are part of a national park in northern Italy. As we meandered along the narrow paths that barely clung to the cliff side of the Italian Riviera, I finally felt at peace. Just the day before, I had walked down the bustling streets of Rome through what felt like every church in the city. Don't get me wrong—all the Roman churches were beautiful. But Cinque Terre was different. The quiet of the villages nudged me toward contemplation. The stillness among the trees next to the sea helped me to recognize this as a place of grace.

Reflection, that crucial part of any spiritual journey, stirs a pilgrim to move forward not only on one's travel itinerary but also to move forward in faith. In "Get on the road" (*Practicing Catholic*, pages 47-48) Linda Monitello explains why we need the physical journey to help us make the spiritual one.

Cinque Terre was just what I needed to conclude my study abroad program both emotionally and spiritually. I studied the beauty of God's creation in everything: the cliffs, the trees, the sunset over the Ligurian

Sea, the people working in the villages and walking on the paths. I reflected on my time in Italy, quickly drawing to a close—the many new friends I had made, the sacred sites I had explored, the incalculable gallons of gelato I had eaten. I realized that the past four months had been not simply a college semester in a foreign land but a pilgrimage. Cinque Terre helped me to recognize just how far I had actually come.

In this month's cover story ("Choose your own adventure," pages 12-16), Karen Baker highlights five types of pilgrimages: journeys to sacred sites, sojourns in nature, trips to secular historical sites, volunteer tourism, and "staycations" to explore spiritual places close to home. Each experience can bring the pilgrim closer to God in its unique way. It doesn't matter where you decide to travel, she says. "Wherever you go," Baker writes, "just remember: God is in all things."

Whether planning an elaborate trip to the Holy Land or a spontaneous, humble walk in the woods near home, let's—like all good pilgrims—keep our eyes open for God along the way.

—Caitlyn Schmid



Angela Cox

U.S. Catholic

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U.S. CATHOLIC believes that it makes a difference whether you're Catholic and that Catholicism is a spiritual path that makes sense, a way to live a better and richer life. We invite and help our readers to explore the wisdom of our faith tradition and to apply that faith to the challenges of life in the 21st century. We celebrate the vibrancy and diversity of contemporary Catholicism and aim to inspire readers with a positive vision of Catholic faith today. We conduct our mission with a firm belief that the Catholic faith, well lived, responds best to our deepest longings and aspirations.

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Worth the cost?

I received a Catholic education from kindergarten through college graduation. My parents, who are devout Catholics, sacrificed a lot to put me through a Catholic high school. After high school it was heavily implied that I would continue my education at a Catholic college (“How can I ever repay you?” February). My grades through high school were average and my emotional maturity was below that of most 18-year-olds, and looking back nearly 15 years later, the sensible route would have been for me to go to an in-state community college and then transfer to a four-year college.

What I ended up doing was going to an out-of-state, four-year Catholic college. At the time, this small school in the Midwest was comprised of

either athletes or legacy students. I was neither, and it took me a few years to find my group of friends and direction in life, all along getting charged \$20,000-plus a year to do so. Yes, I received some financial aid, and my parents helped with some of the room and board, but I was still taking out on average \$10,000 to \$12,000 a year in student loans.

I’m still paying these loans off at the age of 32 and very often wonder if it was all worth it. I met great lifelong friends that I still keep in contact with. But 10 years out of college, I still can’t tell you if it was the right decision for me.

Since I’ve left, my alma mater has gone through a resurgence and is often touted as one of the top Catholic colleges in the country. I’m proud of that fact, but I know it wasn’t like that when I attended. I’m also proud of the person that I’ve become, but I question whether I could have gone about it through a different route—one that doesn’t still have me paying \$400 a month in student loans.

Denis Schmidt
Kansas City, Mo.

Testing the limits

The biggest problem in schools today is “teaching to the test” (“Putting schools to the test,” *Expert Witness*, February). Then a new test comes out and the teachers have to change again. There is never enough time to find out if a method, core, or whatever is working. The latest example is the “Common Core” standards.

Educators, not Washington people, need to decide what is the best for our children and stick to it. I congratulate those systems that decided to do what is best for their students.

Sister Ann Frederick Leonard, O.P.
St. Catherine, Ky.

from **uscatholic.org**

Out of sync

A Univision survey of more than 12,000 Catholics worldwide showed that many disagree with their church’s teachings, especially when it comes to marriage and sexuality. Readers weighed in with their own opinions on the findings.

I wonder if anyone in the hierarchy is really surprised. Is acknowledging that majorities of Catholics in many countries do not agree with some church teachings a way to open the door to discussion of these issues?

—ATF45

Imagine the nerve of people, daring to use their own conscience! —poetman

The problem is that most Catholics don’t have a conscience informed by the teachings of Christ. Simply because so many people disagree with church teaching does not even suggest a need for change in that teaching.

—robert chacon

U.S. Catholic Book Club

This month we are reading

Pilgrimage— The Sacred Art

By Dr. Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook

Join the discussion

Unlike tourism, pilgrimages are not about the final destination, but rather the journey of life along the way. In her book *Pilgrimage—The Sacred Art*, Dr. Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook explores how they transform the mind, body, and soul, and how they break down barriers between religions, nationalities, and cultures.

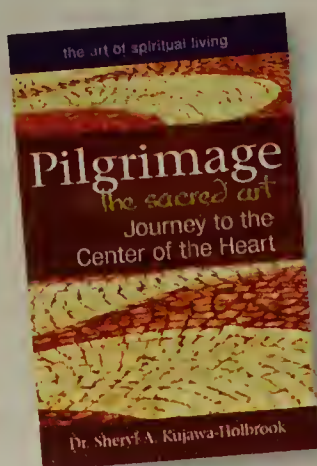
This useful and inspiring guide—a life-changing journey in and of itself—uncovers the many reasons why pilgrims decide to venture forth in the first place: to find healing, for spiritual replenishment, simply out of curiosity, or to discover their roots. With questions to reflect on before and after a pilgrimage, as well as travel tips to make the most out of the experience, this is a must-read for all seeking the center of their heart.

—Caitlyn Schmid, Editorial Assistant, U.S. Catholic

Pilgrimage—The Sacred Art

Journey to the Center of the Heart

By Dr. Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook



This fascinating look at pilgrimage explores the many dimensions of the pilgrimage experience and how it can lead you on a journey to a greater sense of peace and compassion.

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A glimpse of heaven

As an artist and painter who also creates (with a small 'c'), "Get lost in space" (February) moved my thought processes. Brother Guy Consolmagno states that "the sky is not some barrier between us and outer space (or God, I assume) but in fact touches us on a regular basis."

The God of all energy incorporates the whole universe with this energy—birthing, dying, and rebirthing.

J. M. Zatlukal
The Villages, Fla.

The images in "Get lost in space" are great. It is a shame that we are deprived of the spectacular direct view of the heavens at night due to light pollution.

I think it is ironic that we have spectacular views of the immensity of the universe like those chosen by Brother Guy Consolmagno, yet we cannot experience some of this by directly looking upward. Sometimes I think it shuts one door to spiritual growth.

I myself have only seen the sea of stars three times in my life, while on canoe trips in the wilderness. I have seen these stars again by looking through an image intensifier device, but the narrow field of view and artificial color does not duplicate the experience.

Stanley Kopacz
East Stroudsburg, Pa.

Let it bee

A beekeeper myself for many years, I did not have problems with the deaths of bees as you see today ("Bee forewarned," *Margin Notes*, February).

The bees perish because we treat them like corporate machines, gaining maximum profit at their expense. Our current methods of beekeeping have opened the door to all manner of disease. It is the culture of death, where utility is everything.

Ronald Nevinger
via uscatholic.org

Marriage problems

Thank you for Bryan Cones' article about religious and civil marriages ("It's time to separate church and state marriages," *Sounding Board*, February). I have long maintained that, at least in the United States, there is a fundamental distinction between civil and sacramental marriages.

However, Mr. Cones introduces an element I never considered, i.e., to remove from the church the authority to act in the capacity of a civil authority. Fantastic idea! Thus a church marriage would be strictly sacramental.

Kenneth White
Chicago, Ill.

True history

The era of slavery was an interesting piece of history ("American horror story," *Culture in Context*, February). The details of history are always more interesting than the glossed-over idealized version we got in grammar and high school.

It would be interesting to see a documentary comparing slavery under the Romans with that under the Constitution of the United States. We'll never figure out the present or the future if we have a la-la land version of our own past.

Name withheld
via uscatholic.org

Nun better

I loved "From piety to politics" (*Expert Witness*, January). Sister Nancy Sylvester explained the background, history, thinking behind discernment, and the fact that not everybody was always on the same page in reaction to the many changes after Vatican II.

The habit was good branding; we need to keep working on better branding today. Sisters need to continue doing what others aren't, just like the sisters once did in schools and hospitals.

You should send the interview with

what do you think?

U.S. CATHOLIC invites readers to send their comments on published articles to You May Be Right, 205 W. Monroe Street, Chicago, IL 60606. Or e-mail them to letters@uscatholic.org. Please include name, city, and state. Due to space limitation letters may be edited or condensed.

Sister Nancy to Pope Francis; it will help him realize he doesn't need to keep worrying about American sisters.

Rene Buchanan
Allston, Mass.

Dual purpose

Joseph McHugh makes a good point at the close of his article on Jesus' baptism:

"Jesus was baptized not for his own benefit but for ours" ("Why did Jesus need to be baptized?" *Glad You Asked*, January). It may also be noted that Jesus did not consider his baptism to be completed until he had fulfilled the role of the *Ebed Jahweh*, the suffering servant of God.

In Luke 12:50 (The Jerusalem Bible) Jesus says, "There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress until it is over." Also the voice of God at Jesus' baptism in the Jordan clearly identified him with the role of the suffering servant by quoting from Isaiah 42:1, the first of the "servant hymns."

Rev. Donald F. Riechers (ELCA)
Diamond City, Ariz.

Correction

In "Putting schools to the test" (February), the University of Notre Dame Alliance for Catholic Education's Service through Teaching program was incorrectly identified as "Teaching through Service." We apologize for this error.

—The Editors



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Sole cleansing



© Flickr/Johnragai

Have you ever wondered why we don't wash feet in church every Sunday? It's something I think about every Holy Thursday, when at my parish the bowls and pitchers and towels come out after the gospel, the music begins, and there's an awkward pause in the ritual: Is anyone going to do it this year? And then inevitably someone—usually a parent dragged by a small child—gets the action going. Before you know it, every bowl has a foot in it, and (almost) everyone takes a turn at washing and being washed.

The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell a similar story of the Last Supper, with Jesus blessing bread and wine and sharing them, commanding his friends to remember him in this way.

And every week that is more or less what we do. But on Holy Thursday night, we read the “other” institution of the Eucharist, from the Gospel of

**Go ahead, get your feet washed.
And wash someone else's—you'll
see why Jesus insisted on it.**

John: no bread, no wine, no food at all. Just feet—not at all appetizing—along with

an apostolic show of resistance from Peter, to which we all can probably relate as we peel off our socks and hope that we remembered to clip our toenails.

But if it's so important, the very core of following Jesus, why not do it every Sunday? Is it just impractical to wash feet? Or is it something about feet specifically? Why not hands? If Jesus just wanted to present an object lesson about serving one another, preparing the meal or waiting at table surely would have sufficed.

Then again, there is something about feet: They are the places on our bodies where we most often touch the ground from which we were taken and to which we will return. They are the precarious perches that bear all of our weight, performing miraculous feats of balance, but sometimes failing equally spectacularly. They even preserve the record of our lives, starting out newborn soft and clean and usually ending up so gnarly, calloused, and beat up that no amount of buffing or care can erase the wear and tear they suffered.

Maybe that's why, among other things, Peter gets so incensed at Jesus' behavior: It's bad enough that Jesus is behaving like a slave, but washing feet is just too much to tolerate. “You will never wash my feet,” says Peter. “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me,” comes the harsh reply (John 13:8).

It's not just a question of feet, but of exposing feet, of being washed as well as washing. Jesus isn't talking here about the kind of service where someone with a lot of something gives it to someone who doesn't have enough; there are no haves and have-nots at the Lord's table. It's about a different kind of relationship altogether, one in which everyone recognizes that we all have dirty feet and we need each other to be made clean.

Maybe that's why weekly foot washing never really caught on. It's a little hard to expose week after week that our feet keep getting dirty and that we need to keep coming back to wash and be washed. With that kind of nakedness, it would be hard for some of us to lord it over others. The emperor would have no shoes.

“Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him,” says Jesus of what he has done (John 13:31). When we wash and are washed, we celebrate the heart of what we do every Sunday over bread and wine. The good news is that God welcomes us, dirty feet and all, to sit and eat at the family table. The only etiquette required is that we must wash and allow ourselves to be washed, caring for each other—and the world—as we would a family member.

We don't wash feet every Sunday, but at least on this one night, we get our once-yearly chance to practice in ritual the shape of Christian life. Do we dare take off our shoes and socks, to come with dirty feet and be washed? Do we dare to kneel down and wash another person's dirty feet? Or, to ask it another way: Will we let God be glorified in us, as God was glorified in Jesus? **USC**

By Bryan Cones, a writer living in Chicago.

On the front lines



Igor Kovalenko/Epa/Newscom

KIEV, Ukraine — A priest stands with a cross near a barricade in the wake of clashes between protesters and riot police in Kiev, Ukraine in February. More than 60 people were killed during street fighting in Kiev on February 20 alone, according to the Ukrainian Health Ministry.

The *Washington Post* reports that both Orthodox and Catholic priests have been at or near the primary locations of the clashes between protesters and police, ministering to people on both sides of the conflict.

“ verbatim

“Please have no leniency on me. To remain in prison for the rest of my life would be the greatest honor you could give me.”

—Holy Child of Jesus Sister Megan Rice, age 84, after being sentenced to three years in prison for her July 2012 demonstration against nuclear weapons (*USA Today*, February 18)

“It’s essential that we remember that health care for all is grounded in the gospel. Respect for life demands that we care for it.”

—Daughters of Charity Sister Carol Keehan, president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, writing about the merits of the Affordable Care Act (*Sojourners*, March 2014)

“Anybody who doesn’t show love towards gay and lesbian people is insulting God. They are not just homophobic if they do that. They are actually God-ophobic, because God loves every one of those people.”

—Ireland’s Archbishop Diarmuid Martin in response to a nationwide debate about gay rights sparked by a drag queen’s speech about anti-gay prejudice in the country (*Associated Press*, February 11)

goodnews

VATICAN CITY—Pope Francis welcomed 19 prison inmates to the Casa Santa Marta before his general audience on February 19, reported *L’Osservatore Romano*.

The men had attended a morning Mass at the Vatican Grottoes. When Pope Francis learned of their presence, he invited them to his residence for a 45-minute conversation.

The pontiff prayed with and for the inmates as he listened to each of their stories. After one inmate handed Pope Francis a personal letter, the pope responded by speaking about grace, mercy, and pardon.

Said Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, who celebrated the Mass, “It was a sign of great fatherhood for a group of people on a spiritual journey.”

badnews

OTTAWA—Court documents allege that the Catholic Church in Canada is withholding millions of dollars in reparations payments owed as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, according to CBC News.

Indian residential schools operated from the late 19th century through the 1990s—more than 70 percent of them run by the Catholic Church—and became known for allegations of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse.

The settlement, reached in 2006, required both the government and churches to assist with reparations. According to the government, the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United churches have provided their required funds, though at least \$1.6 million is outstanding from the Catholic Church.

ontheweb

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Call me, maybe I'll get rid of your demons

If you happen to find yourself in the midst of a demonic possession but between work and taking care of the kids you just haven't had time to get to your primary care exorcist, you may be in luck.

Evangelical pastor Bob Larson has been performing exorcisms for years—in fact, he claims to have done around 20,000 of them. But he's not making house calls anymore. Instead he is exorcising demons from the comfort of his own Scottsdale, Arizona office using Skype™, the Internet video phone system. With a suggested donation of just \$295, Reverend Larson will spend an hour chatting with you and diagnosing what may have possessed you to call. He will then remove any demonic ailment, allowing you to get on with your day demon-free.

It gives me great pleasure to tell you that the devil is now on the cutting room floor.

—Roma Downey, producer of the film *Son of God*. The film is adapted from the History Channel's miniseries *The Bible*, which stars an actor as Satan who bears an uncanny resemblance to President Barack Obama. In *Son of God*, the producers have decided to avoid controversy by snipping the devil right out of the film.

Saint house rock

Bruce Springsteen, Patti Smith, and former Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz don't often play the same venues, but Reuters is reporting that a new book has them all stopping in to pay their respects to St. Francis.

Vado da Francesco, (or *I am going to Francis*) was written by Father Enzo Fortunato, the spokesman and public face of the convent complex in Assisi where Francis is buried. The book highlights more than 50 celebrities who

have stopped by Francis' burial place.

Along with the Boss, Carlos Santana

visited, and "godmother of punk" Patti Smith spent some time meditating by the tomb. She even wrote a song inspired by St. Francis, "Constantine's Dream."

Jade Jagger, daughter of Rolling Stones singer Mick, is such a Francis fanatic that she named her own daughter Assisi. She was touched when she visited, writing in a letter reprinted in the book, "For me, he (Francis) was always the first environmentalist and hippy and was a true inspiration to me from my early years."



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you follow?

LOLs from Twitter and the blogosphere

The main prerequisite for admission to heaven is proper grammar.

@TheTweetOfGod 2/17/14

For whatever it was that Willis was talking about, O Lord, we pray.

@UnvirtuousAbbey 2/2/14

My peace I tweeteth unto you.

@JesusOfNaz316 2/3/14

If there are restaurants in heaven, I'm pretty sure they'll all have chips and salsa.

@Rev_Norespect 2/22/14

Damn shame the T-Rexes wouldn't fit on Noah's ark.

@Jesus_M_Christ 2/24/14



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At My Brother's Wake

At my brother's wake, in the capacious dining room of the university
 Where he taught, our dad stands up slowly to speak about his second
 Son. The brothers and the sister have spoken, and now it's dad's turn.
 You all have spoken of many things that we loved and admired about
 Our son, he said, looking down at our mom in her wheelchair, but we
 Would like to go back to the beginning for a moment; he didn't speak
 For his first two years, you know. We were worried, you bet we were;
 But then one day, as we were driving along, with him in the back seat,
 He suddenly said, clearly and quietly, *greenhouse*. And indeed there's
 A greenhouse right there. We never forgot that. It seems to me that he
 Only said what he thought needed to be said. He did not waste a word,
 And he strove for clarity and precision in what he did say. So when he
 Said *I love you, and I am proud of you*, as his two children say he said
 All the time, you can be absolutely certain that is what he meant to say
 With all his heart. His mother and I think that is important to say again;
 He said only what he thought needed to be said, and what he said most
 Was *I love you, and I am proud of you*. There's a lesson here for us all.

—Brian Doyle

Choose your own ADVENTURE

Planes, trains, and automobiles may come in handy while seeking God in far-off places, or even close to home. Here are five spiritual detours to satisfy a restless heart.

by Karen Baker

One of my favorite family vacation memories consists of a station wagon breakdown on the side of the road somewhere in Georgia. My mother scooped peanut butter out of a jar for five cranky kids and prayed that the man who took my father to get gas was a trustworthy soul. (He was, and we drove off well-fed and less cranky, with my mother thanking Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.) The funny thing is, I have no memory of where we were going on that trip; I only remember the experience of God in the car and in the man who saved us from despair.

St. Ignatius of Loyola taught that the first key to a healthy spirituality is to find God in all things. If we take

Ignatius' wisdom to heart, we could say that every journey is a spiritual journey. As St. Joseph Sister Sallie Latkovich of Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago says, "Anytime anyone sets out from home, it's a time of rediscovery. Whether it's a day trip or a pilgrimage, near or far, a journey is always an opportunity to discover God and oneself in new places and new things."

Latkovich, director of Bible study and travel programs at CTU, gives the example of a recent train trip home from Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, when she met a homeless man

who offered to help with her luggage. "It was a lovely encounter," she says. "If you are open to it, you can see God in all people and places."

It is true that we chance an encounter with God each time we step foot outside of the front door. But there are also some tried and true ways for people looking to get a little face time with the Alpha and Omega.

Roman Catholic holiday

This seems obvious: If you want to meet God head-on, go to the so-called "thin places"—where the space between

Karen Baker, a freelance writer for The New Orleans Advocate and the Clarion Herald, works in parish ministry at Mary, Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Mandeville, Louisiana.

ATURE

heaven and earth collapses. No one knows precisely where the term “thin places” originated, but it seems to have its roots in Celtic spirituality. Many sacred sites around the globe seem to have just this quality.

My first experience with a sacred site was a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the summer of 2012, organized by the Society of St. Teresa of Jesus. I was putting together a newsletter for the Teresian Sisters in Covington, Louisiana, when I saw their ad for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I instantly knew I had to go. I called my local Teresian, Sister Marina Aranzabal, and said: “I need to go on this trip! Sign me up!”

My financial picture wasn’t the prettiest, but the Holy Spirit told me I had to go, so I listened. I assumed that the Holy Spirit wanted me to spend my birthday on the Sea of Galilee, to be in the places where Jesus lived and breathed. But there was much more in store for me as I traveled around Israel.

It turned out that *The Times-Picayune* in New Orleans picked June 12, 2012, for its massive layoff day. I had worked for the newspaper for 25 years,

and suddenly the owners were going digital and sending 200 employees packing. I was sitting in a hotel a block from the Sea of Galilee when I was fired. (Yes, an editor called me while I was on pilgrimage.) During that trip, the phrase “Come, follow me” took on a very new meaning.

And it was a beautiful journey. I prayed with 40 other pilgrims on the Mount of Beatitudes, on the Sea of Galilee, at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, and along the Way of the Cross. The Holy Land is filled with thin places, and some of those places are filled with God even in spite of the darkness that fills them, too.

Latkovich recently led a trip to Jerusalem, and she remembers visiting the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum. “It is very difficult to go there,” she says. “It is difficult to see what people have done to other people. I had a gut-wrenching response to what I saw, but I was mindful that God has the same gut-wrenching response.”

The Holy Land is but one of many thin places to which people journey to find new spiritual depth. Another is Assisi, especially now that our pope is

named after the saint who lived in that Italian town. Of all the places she visited in Italy, Jewell Bayhi, director of religious education at Mary, Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Mandeville, Louisiana, remembers Assisi most fondly, calling it a “spiritual, humble place.”

She especially remembers sitting in St. Mary of the Angels Basilica in Assisi, the church located on the spot where Francis renounced the world and embraced poverty. “I realized the difference between a ‘trip’ and a ‘pilgrimage’ on that journey,” she says. “We were not just looking at things but reflecting upon them in light of what we read about St. Francis. It was awesome.”

Emily Susko of Baltimore had a similar experience during a pilgrimage to Lourdes, France, in 2008. “I’ve visited a lot of churches in Europe—in Germany, France, Italy, and Ireland. Most of the time I just feel like I’m with a bunch of tourists. But Lourdes, while I’m sure it had plenty of tourists, felt more like a group of pilgrims.” It was a place, Susko says, where she could focus “on how I could be more holy.”

She remembers many beautiful things about Lourdes, but the event that sticks in her mind the most—Lourdes is in the foothills of the Pyrenees—was the beauty of God’s creation. “I went on an afternoon hike on the closest mountain. At the top of the mountain, I had a lovely view over the area, and I could see snowcaps on nearby peaks,” she says. “I can’t figure out how to say this without sounding cheesy, but the natural world has always been a particularly wonderful place for me to experience God and appreciate God’s works.”

Hike up your spirit

Susko’s afternoon hike experience is far from unusual. In fact, many people use nature as their primary reason for not attending church, claiming, “I find God on the beach.” For many that’s true, and taking time in the great outdoors can certainly be a way to experience God.

Born and raised in the below sea

level land of New Orleans, I always loved visiting the mountains and listening for God’s voice in the beauty of a tree-shaded trail or in the vast panoramas of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

My husband, children, and I were hiking up past Laurel Falls in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park several years ago when my 9-year-old daughter stomped her feet, saying, “I don’t want to hike anymore!” She walked ahead of me in a huff. Before I knew it, she stomped back: “There’s a deer up there.” I walked ahead and sure enough, a beautiful deer stood in the middle of the trail. God is full of surprises.

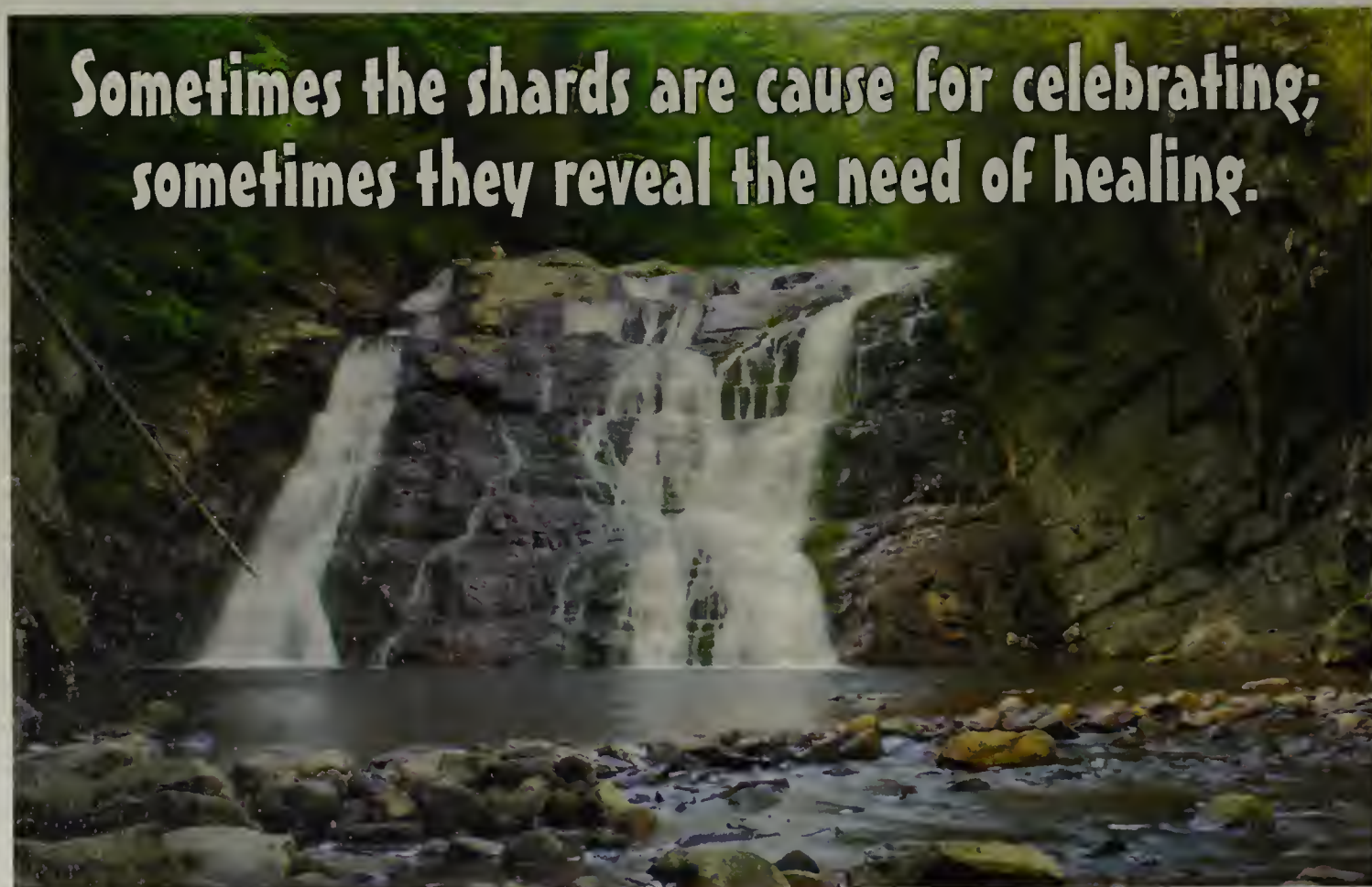
It’s those divine surprises that draw people to the Spirituality in Nature retreats led by Sacred Heart Sister Diane Roche, director of the Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation at the Stuart Center in Washington. “It started as vocation outreach,” Roche says, adding that she and Sister Mary Pat

White (“a mean biker”) were looking for ways to reach out to those who might be interested in vocations. As a result, she says, “We cooked up these retreats.”

The Spirituality in Nature retreats have included hiking and biking trips to the Black Hills of South Dakota and the White Mountains of New England. In July retreatants will travel to the Oakland, California area to find God in the nature of the inner city. “We thought we were doing these for young people, but there is a real hunger for these in people of all ages,” says Roche.

The retreats include prayer before the day begins “to set the tone for the day,” she says. Participants are given hints for paying attention to the movement of the Spirit in the repetitive action of hiking or biking.

In the evenings, “we gather the fruits of the day,” she says. “We might ask, ‘What face of God was revealed to you?’ God has many ways of talking to us.”



©Flickr/Pat Murray

Roche's favorite activity for finding God is biking. "There are shards of memory so deep," she says. "The repetitive exercises help them come to the surface." Sometimes the shards are cause for celebrating; sometimes they reveal the need of healing.

Although the Spirituality in Nature retreats are not open to the public (unless you have a connection to the Sisters of the Sacred Heart), Roche's tips on finding God in nature can be used anywhere, anytime. It may be as simple as paying attention to the sky as you drive.

Julie and Mark Marchione and their family moved from Jacksonville, Florida to Petaluma, California several years ago, finding God as they crossed the country in their car. "We saw many incredible sunrises and sunsets in our travel," Julie says, each one reminding her of God's great beauty.

The sacred in the secular

God's beauty is imbued not only in "holy" places or in nature, but also in the secular world. Some spaces are sacred because they hold profound meaning. They bring us into contact with the mystery of God.

When my daughters were about 5 and 6, they became fascinated with the story of Helen Keller. So I decided that our summer vacation to North Carolina would take a small detour—we traveled to Tuscumbia, in the northern reaches of Alabama, to visit Helen's birthplace. We saw the water pump where Annie Sullivan furiously signed "water" into Helen's open hand while water poured over it. It was powerful to stand there in that spot, to think about a young girl locked in darkness who suddenly could "see."

Helen Keller's house will always hold a special place in my heart. I suspect almost everyone has a "Helen" story, the story of a special place. For Deacon Eddy Beckendorf of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, that place is Arlington National Cemetery, and the Tomb of the Unknowns in particular.

I sat quietly in awe of the sacredness I found present.

©Flickr/Sabbath927

In the mid-1980s, Beckendorf was traveling to Maryland on business and asked his wife, Susan, to fly from New Orleans to meet him so they could visit Washington. As a Vietnam veteran, he wanted to see the Vietnam Memorial. They made sure to arrive in time to witness the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

"At the time we visited, there were the remains of soldiers from World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War in the tomb. After

we were seated, I sat quietly in awe of the sacredness I found present," not only in the tomb, he says, but in the way the members of the Third U.S. Infantry conducted their duty with such reverence.

"As the infantry entered the plaza to conduct the changing of the guard, I realized that I had been praying for and thinking about the families of the soldiers who lay in the tomb," says Beckendorf. "A feeling of overwhelming sadness came over me as I grieved for the families that never had the oppor-

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tunity to say goodbye.” Beckendorf felt a profound connection to the deceased and their families, and he gained a new appreciation, he says, for the “communion of saints.”

“In silence, Susan and I exited the Plaza of the Tomb of the Unknowns,” he says. They have returned twice, and it never fails to touch his heart.

Tourism with a heart

In December 2007, my parish hosted a group of parishioners from St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in St. John, Indiana. They were members of a parish ministry called Faith Without Borders who came to help repair homes after Hurricane Katrina. They arrived the day after Christmas and slept on cots in our school’s cafeteria. They got up early every day for five days and traveled to the city to help gut houses, clean debris, and listen to the stories of loss.

Faith Without Borders is still going strong at St. John; in fact, it includes many mission opportunities under its umbrella. One of those is the Friends of the Orphans. As part of that ministry, parishioner WenDee Anderson took a trip to the Dominican Republic just after Christmas 2013 to visit an orphanage. “There were 32 of us on this trip, with 21 from my parish,” she says. “After Christmas is a good time to go.”

The team of volunteer tourists built pews, shelves, and benches. They also had fun playing volleyball with the kids, and they took time at night to reflect upon the meaning of all that they did

during the day. “These trips are about God’s grace,” Anderson says. “It’s really a purely selfish thing. I get so much out of this. We see on these trips how much we touch someone’s heart.”

Why spend the holidays at an orphanage in another country? “God says we are here to help,” Anderson says. If we have time, or talent, or treasure to share, we just have to do it, she says, adding, “These children touch your heart.”

If you are looking for a way to serve others through volunteer tourism, opportunities abound. Becki Leedy of Simi Valley, California has led two youth groups to work with the Appalachia Service Project, an interdenominational ministry that aims to improve the living conditions of poverty-stricken people in Appalachia.

In 1997 she led a group to a small town in Kentucky. “On my second trip, in 2000, I was able to travel with my husband and my son, who had just turned 16, to Flag Pond, Tennessee. I was more prepared for the poverty we would see, but again not prepared for how I would be touched by the family” whose home they helped repair.

“I have found that giving money or goods as a donation is helpful and needed, but when you look into the eyes of the person you are serving,” she says, “God sets your heart on fire and you know you have looked into the eyes of Jesus.”

Spiritual “staycations”

With limited budgets and our busy schedules, it isn’t always so easy or even

possible to take a pilgrimage to Assisi, visit Arlington, climb a mountain, or travel to the Dominican Republic. Depending on where you live, however, you can often find a spiritually enriching spot in your own backyard.

This country is full of cathedrals, basilicas, and shrines. I am blessed to live about 10 miles south of St. Joseph Abbey, a Benedictine monastery in St. Benedict, Louisiana that is a world set apart. I can stop in for vespers, walk the grounds, or visit the gift shop for some “monk soap.”

I’m sure you have somewhere sacred not far from you. Denise Lang of Katy, Texas, enjoys traveling to the San Antonio area, a short drive away, to visit the Franciscan Missions. (The California Missions, she says, are on her bucket list.)

“In Texas, when the Spaniards came to Mexico, the Franciscans came to evangelize the Indians who lived there,” she says. “There are five mission churches in San Antonio. One is just a wall, a shell. But there is one where you can go to Mass every day. It is very moving.”

She also enjoys the hill country of Texas, where the “painted churches” dot the hillsides. They were built by German and Czech immigrants who didn’t have the money for statues, she says, “so they painted statues on the walls.”

Nearly every city or town has a sacred spot with a story to tell. It may be as easy as checking with your local parish or diocese. I once took my sixth-grade religion class into our church to show them where a relic of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos is buried under the altar. That quick trip opened up a whole new encounter with holiness.

If you are looking for a spiritually enriching journey, you can travel far or stay close; you can hike up a mountain or fly to the Holy Land; you can serve the poor or feed your kids peanut butter out of the jar. Just remember: God is in all things. Ignatius wouldn’t steer us wrong. Breathe it in, and enjoy the trip. As Sister Sallie Latkovich says, “When you go somewhere new or different, you encounter new epiphanies along the way.” **USC**



Let the people have their say

Rather than handing down bishops from on high, the church should listen to those on the ground when choosing its leaders.

Pope Francis says that he wants a special kind of bishop for our church—he wants “shepherds who smell of their sheep.” Let us take our Holy Father at his word: Who knows how the sheep smell better than the sheep themselves? No one. So then why not let the sheep make a modest proposal and ask that we laypeople have a significant say in the choice of our bishops?

This proposal is not as radical as it may seem at first glance. Once the office of bishop was clearly established in the early church, that office was filled by the choice of the local people and priests, and ratified by the neighboring bishops as a sign of the unity of the church. Even unbaptized persons were eligible to be chosen for bishop, as we know from the story of St. Ambrose, who was acclaimed

by the clergy and people as bishop of Milan while he was still a catechumen. And the very first bishop in the United States, John Carroll, was elected by the priests of Maryland and confirmed by the pope.

Today we are so used to the pope choosing our bishops for us without any input from those whom the bishop will serve that we forget it was not always that way. In fact the right of the pope to choose bishops was only finally settled by the 1917

By Nicholas Cafardi, dean emeritus and professor of law at Duquesne University Law School. Sounding Board is one person's take on a many-sided subject and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of U.S. Catholic, its editors, or the Claretians.

Code of Canon Law, which clearly allocated that power to the holder of the papal office.

The way bishops are chosen today arguably does have some limited lay input. When a priest is being considered for appointment as bishop, the apostolic nuncio—the pope’s representative to the United States—sends out what are called apostolic letters. These letters go to select laypeople from the diocese, asking their knowledge of the candidate’s position on some very specific issues, such as birth control, abortion, married priests, female priests, the remarriage of divorced Catholics, and same-sex marriage.

These questions reveal the slant of the Vatican that has given us so many “culture warrior” bishops, although perhaps the questions will change under Pope Francis. Maybe the apostolic letters will begin to ask new questions: Does this man have a concern for the poor? Does he dress in the best clothes, drive a fancy car, and enjoy fine food and drink? Does he spend more time with rich people than with poor people? Even better, the letters might possibly go to different people. Right now, the only folks who get those letters tend to be wealthy donors; the poor people of a diocese never get apostolic letters from the papal nuncio. Besides the limited input of such apostolic letters, however, there really is no lay participation regarding which men are chosen to be our bishops.

So then how do bishops come to be chosen today? Dioceses in the United States are divided into what are known as “ecclesiastical provinces.” For example, every diocese in the state of Illinois is in the province of Chicago, every diocese in the state of Pennsylvania is in the province of Philadelphia, and so on. Each of these provinces has a list of potential candidates for bishop, compiled from suggestions of priests favored by the bishops of that province, which they update every so often. No laypeople are given the chance to contribute any names to that list.

Supposedly, when there is a need for a diocesan bishop in the province, the papal nuncio begins the hunt by looking at the candidates on that list. And even more importantly, the papal nuncio is not bound by the list; it is only a starting point. He may place other names of priests from around the country on the list of candidates that he prepares.

The nuncio narrows the candidates down to a final list of three names which is sent to the Congregation for Bishops in Rome. The list is vetted, per-

haps rewritten with different names, and then sent on to the pope. The pope can pick any name from the list of three that the Congregation for Bishops gives him, or he can go off-list and pick someone completely different. John Paul II, who was well-traveled both before and after becoming pope, supposedly went off-list a number of times to name as diocesan bishops men whom he knew personally.

This current system can result in bishops being parachuted into dioceses by headquarters in Rome, without any knowledge of the diocese, its priests, or its people. Sometimes that works out, sometimes it doesn’t. Some bishops from outside are quick studies and genuinely get to know their priests and people before they begin making major decisions. Others arrive thinking that they already know all they need to know and proceed from one disastrous decision to another. Usually this system gives us bishops whose only loyalty is upward—to their patrons in Rome or to the national hierarchy who campaigned for them—and not to their own priests and people.

I think that this one fact alone—the way they were chosen as bishops to begin with—helps to explain a lot about the way the American bishops mishandled the clergy child sexual abuse crisis. Recall that the national bishops conference dithered for years, looking for a solution from Rome. Being afraid to act without one, they did nothing while the situation deteriorated in the United States. Bishops who were more accountable to their people would not have acted this way.

What would it look like if laypeople had a real role in the choice of our bishops? In the normal course of events, before a diocese is about to fall vacant—and this is not a surprise date since bishops must retire when they turn 75, which is right after the year they turn 74—the papal nuncio or someone from his staff should actually travel to the diocese and talk to the laypeople directly. In any given year, there are fewer than a dozen dioceses that become open, so this would not require a lot of travel. The nuncio’s staff should visit parishes and ask people to stay after Mass to talk about potential bishop candidates; that way you would get those Catholics who actually participate in the life of the church (anywhere from 27 to 35 percent in most dioceses) to give their opinion.

The nuncio or his staff should then hold a convocation in the diocese where folks chosen by the people of each parish, not by the pastor, would be asked to attend and discuss suitable candidates. The

87%

of U.S. Catholic readers surveyed say that if bishops were chosen with more input from laypeople, they would be more responsive to the concerns of laypeople in their diocese.

people know who the good priests are. They are the men who Pope Francis described in his recent talk to the episcopal conferences of Latin America (CELAM) as “pastors, close to people, fathers and brothers, and gentle, patient, and merciful.” They must be simple men, devoted to poverty, and not driven by ambition. They must be “men who do not think and behave like princes,” Francis said, but “men capable of watching over the flock entrusted to them and protecting everything that keeps it together: guarding their people out of concern for the dangers which could threaten them, but above all instilling hope: so that light will shine in people’s hearts. Men capable of supporting with love and patience God’s dealings with his people.”

Let the people tell the nuncio or his staff in a convocation who these kinds of priests are. They know. And having heard the people of the diocese, the nuncio can then compose his list for Rome, which should be a public list so that the people will know whether they were heard or not.

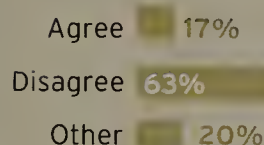
Some will say this leaves the episcopal office open to campaigning among the laity, and priests should not be able to campaign to be bishop—it is unseemly. Reality alert: Priests already do campaign to become bishops; the laity just do not know about it. Priests campaign with their bishop friends to get on the provincial list. They campaign with the papal nuncio to get on the list of three names sent to Rome, usually with the help of affluent donors who have direct access to the nuncio. There are even stories of the head of a wealthy Catholic fraternal organization carrying the names of priest friends to Rome for advancement.

And it does not stop there. Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, the head of the Congregation for Bishops from 1984–1998, said after leaving office that he was amazed at the bishops who, having just been named to a diocese, would travel to Rome to lobby him for a bigger diocese. This practice gave rise to the phrase “starter diocese” among certain circles in Rome.

So campaigning for the office of bishop by priests does occur. Wouldn’t it better if this were all out in the open—if laypeople knew about it and participated in the process? Indeed, the laity seeing a priest desperate to become a bishop might just consider such ambition, as would Pope Francis, a disqualifying factor. But the sheep do know who the right men are for the job, and the church would be better off with the bishops we get if we were consulted in the process. **USC**

and the survey says...

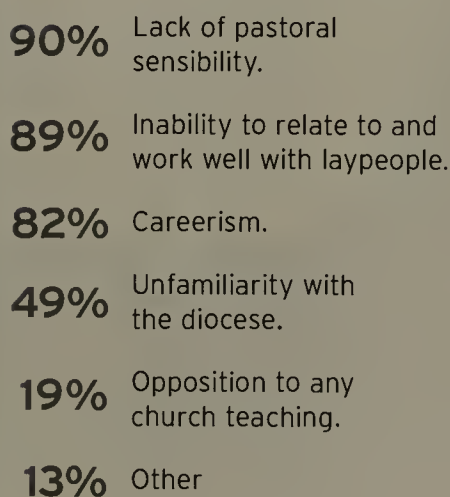
1. The pope and other church leaders are in a position to know more about the pros and cons of potential candidates for bishop than the average layperson.



Representative of “other”:

“They are both essential. The hierarchy must evaluate from their vantage point, but to get the full appreciation they need to see how these individuals are perceived on the ground.”

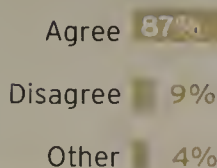
2. Reasons that should disqualify a priest from bishop consideration are:



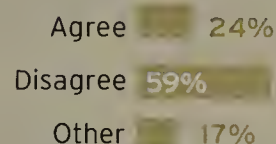
Representative of “other”:

“Lack of a servant attitude. A bishop is to serve his people, not just rule them.”

3. I think if bishops were chosen with more input from laypeople, they would be more responsive to the concerns of laypeople in their diocese.



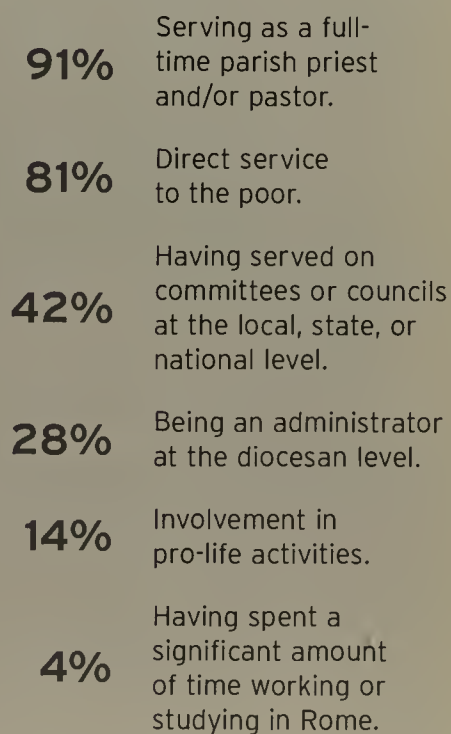
4. Because a bishop must sometimes take unpopular or countercultural stances in favor of church teachings or positions, anything like an “election” would tend to weed out the most prophetic.



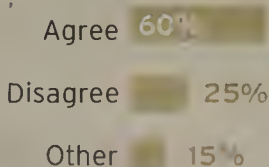
Representative of “other”:

“Maybe, but hopefully the discernment for leadership will be taken with all sincerity and an authentic listening to the Spirit.”

5. Experiences that I would consider essential for a candidate for bishop include:



6. A bishop should never be named to head a diocese that he hasn’t spent at least some time ministering in.



Results are based on survey responses from 593 USCATHOLIC.ORG visitors. A representative selection of their comments follows in *Feedback*.

If I were to write a questionnaire asking laypeople about various priests who were possible bishop candidates, one question I would ask about the priests is...

Does his staff recommend him?

*Mary Janowak
Brookfield, Wis.*

Does he view the church as an inclusive reality in which we all take a full and active part?

*Paul Schlachter
Miami, Fla.*

Have you had experience of this man's kindness and understanding, even when he may disagree with you?

*Susan Kaup Kelley
Somerville, Mass.*

Was he respected by others in the community as a humble and gracious leader? Did he ask for help and not demand it? If so, was he able to get the help?

*Michael Nissen
Kingshill, U.S. Virgin Islands*

How does he relate to persons with disabilities?

*Joachim Studwell
Fox Point, Wis.*

What direct experience does this priest have of working with the poor, homeless, imprisoned, and divorced and separated couples?

*Helene K. Langan
Schoharie, N.Y.*

Is he able to have respectful and pastoral dialogue with people who disagree with church teachings as he attempts to explain the church's position, and then still share a meal if no agreement is reached?

*Vicki Compton
Springfield, Ill.*

Does this man love his job and his people?

*Clarice Peninger
Fort Worth, Texas*

The most positive effect of including more lay input in the selection of bishops would be...

The church would again belong to the people.

*Audrey Iversen
Naperville, Ill.*

More shepherds would be nominated, fewer desk monkeys.

*John Benson
Waynesville, N.C.*

A more diverse approach to choosing the best man for the role of bishop.

*Jennifer Kolber
Vernon Hills, Ill.*

Knowledge of grassroots conditions in the diocese.

*J. M. Farley
Denver, Colo.*

A better field from which to choose cardinals, heads of congregations in Rome, and future popes.

*Paula Burgan
Anchorage, Alaska*

The same feeling voters get after they vote in a secular election: The vote won't matter much, but it's nice to be considered part of the system, and even a cursory involvement in the process makes you more loyal to the system.

*James Foy Whitby
Ontario, Canada*

Bishops who have a better understanding of the challenges ordinary people face in their lives.

*Edda Hackl
Chicago, Ill.*

The chosen candidate is more likely to feel responsibility to his people than to Rome.

*Roger Throm
Elma, N.Y.*

Putting the process in touch with the "real world."

*Anthony Steel
Sydney, Australia*

The biggest drawback to laypeople participating in the selection of bishops would be...

The likely confusion between the familiar political system and the ecclesiastical system. One does not vote the bums out; the spoils do not belong to the victor.

*Brian Ahlstrom
Johnstown, Pa.*

Many leaders of the church would not want to cede any of their authority to the laity.

*Maria Gibbons
Tampa, Fla.*

Most laypeople do not know many priests very well and are unaware of the clericalism that exists in many priests.

*Lenore Belzer
Buffalo, N.Y.*

There are no drawbacks. Staying with this medieval construct is the drawback.

*William Bagley
Madison, Conn.*

Possibility of division of "haves" and "have-nots" in the levels of authority now present in the church.

*Margaret Glose
Chippewa Falls, Wis.*

A small group of like-minded laypeople could hijack the process to the exclusion of everyone else.

*Tricia Wittmann-Todd
Seattle, Wash.*

The bishop is the teacher and leader of the flock. A process like an election would promote a bishop who is more interested in pleasing people than building faith.

*Rolando Rocha
San Antonio, Texas*

Narrowing down the field of candidates.

*Karen Conroy
Moon Township, Pa.*

feedback

If I were part of a group of laypeople selected to help choose the next bishop, my top concern would be...

Whether the people we are considering are compassionate and willing to make statements for social justice, and if they are inclusive to all people.

David Betz
Cupertino, Calif.

His concern in leading the direction of the diocese. How will he reach out to the people and what would he do differently?

Alice Stephens
Jackson, N.J.

Are the people of his parish truly his greatest concern, regardless of class, color, sex, etc.?

Ronald Naumann
Hilton Head, S.C.

That my input would actually have a significant effect on the ultimate choice.

Joe Reid
St. Paul, Minn.

The best thing about the current process for selecting bishops is...

Occasionally it works. Think Pope Francis! Sometimes it doesn't. Choose your own example.

Father Jerome Knies, O.S.A.
Racine, Wis.

The anticipation, such as that of the crowd waiting for the "white smoke" in St. Peter's Square.

John Lemieux
North Smithfield, R.I.

Like Jesus and the apostles, they are sent. The terms "résumé" and "search committee" are not to be found in sacred scripture.

Cynthia Trainque
Leominster, Mass.

People are given a new face (usually) and are usually open and welcoming.

Rose Van Heest
Little Falls, N.J.

When it goes wrong, we can always blame the Vatican!

Maureen McCarron
Conesus, N.Y.

ontheweb

To take our latest survey, visit uscatholic.org/survey.

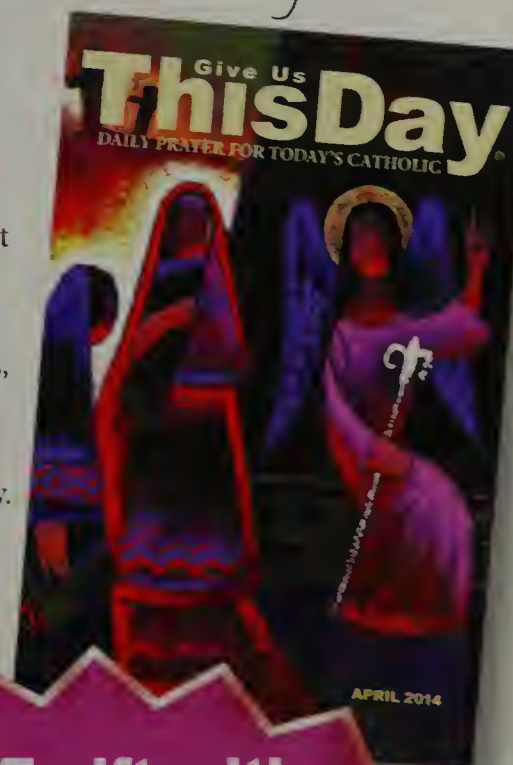
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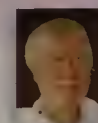
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Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, OMI



Bishop Robert Momeau
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A cross history

by John Christman, S.S.S.



Artists from the fifth century onward demand that we see the crucified Christ with new eyes.

The cross has become so ubiquitous in art that it has perhaps become difficult for us to see it in all of its profundity. Our eyes can become desensitized. We see a

cross or a crucifixion scene depicted in a work of art and it may register as a Christian symbol, or it may simply dissolve in the torrent of images we encounter on a daily basis.

Indeed, there are innumerable images of crosses and crucifixion scenes in our world, stretching from kitsch, devotional art, and folk art all the way to world-renowned masterpieces. In this inundation of images we might sometimes lose track of the unique qualities and deeper significance of some truly sublime and thought-provoking artworks. We may forget that we as Catholics

see the world sacramentally. So, in the midst of our Lenten journey, perhaps it would benefit our faith to examine some of these works of art and discover how the image of the cross may speak to us anew and draw us closer to God.

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Crucifixion scene from the exterior door of Santa Sabina

Images from scripture cover the interiors and exteriors of our sacred spaces. They greet us as we enter a church and they draw our minds to God as we pray. These images have served us well, often familiarizing the faithful with the story of Christ or presenting distinct theological interpretations of certain events.

The exterior wood doors of Santa Sabina in Rome have the distinction of presenting us with one of the earliest existing depictions of the crucifixion. It is a scene at once familiar and different. Jesus is placed centrally in the panel amidst the two thieves, and yet he is much bigger than they are. This artistic device, referred to as “hierarchical scaling,” uses size to emphasize what is of greater value in an image. Thus this enlarged Christ commands our attention in this image.

We also note that Jesus here is not shown wracked in agony and contorted in pain; rather, he is serene and dignified. It is a very human, albeit somewhat generic,

depiction of Christ. While its humble crafting gives us a further sense of Jesus’ humanity, the other devices used in the artwork emphasize a very real faith in the divinity of Christ.



Crucifixion scene from the exterior door, c. 430. Wood. La Chiesa di Santa Sabina, Rome, Italy. Photo courtesy of Laura Maish and William Storage, www.rome101.com.



di Bondone, Giotto (d. 1337). *Crocifissione*, c. 1300. Fresco. La Cappella degli Scrovegni, Padua, Italy. Photo courtesy of the Comune di Padova-Assessorato alla Cultura.

Giotto di Bondone, *Crocifissione*

From early representations of Jesus as a young and beardless man to idealized Greco-Roman influenced imagery and the golden hues of Byzantine iconography, we emerge into the early Italian Renaissance. Instantly recog-

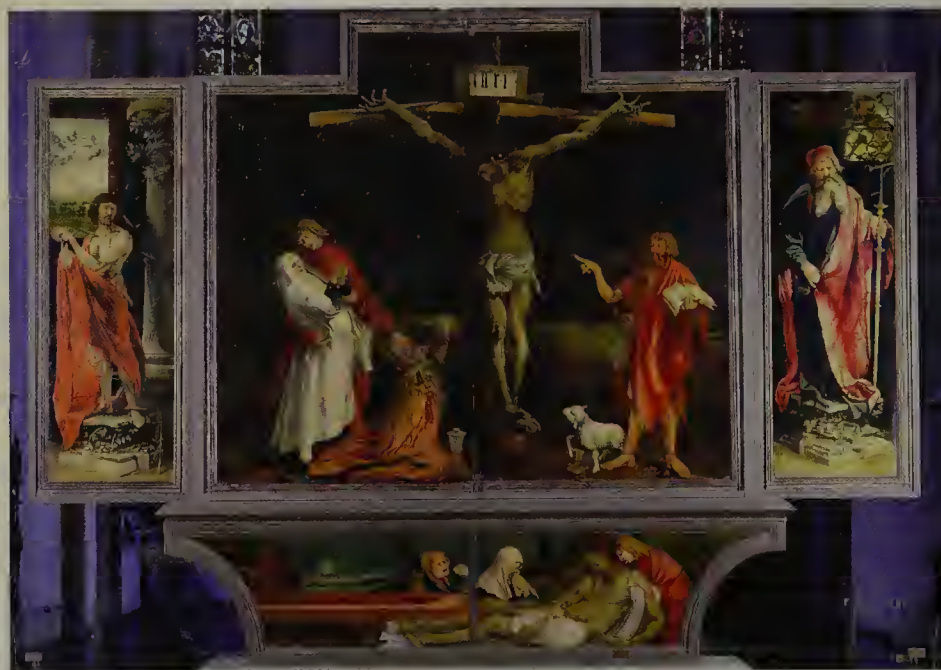
nizable from this era are the breathtaking blue skies of the masterful artist Giotto.

Giotto's heart-wrenching crucifixion scene from the Arena Chapel is likely one of the world's finest. Known not only for his three-dimen-

sional modeling of figures, subtle attention to the effects of light, and the psychological depth of his imagery, Giotto has also been recognized as one of the great innovators of his time. The inconsolably weeping angels, along with

the distraught saints, powerfully ground the idea that heaven and earth are overcome with grief for the death of Jesus as in no other work of art. And yet there is a subtle tranquility to the piece that hints that all is not lost.

Matthias Grünewald, Crucifixion scene from the Isenheim altarpiece



Grünewald, Matthias (1455–1528). Isenheim altarpiece, triptych depicting the Crucifixion and Deposition of Christ, c. 1515. Unterlinden Museum Colmar, The Art Archive at Art Resource, N.Y.

Matthias Grünewald's famous crucifixion scene from the Isenheim altarpiece features no subtle tranquility. Here agony, suffering, and death are shrouded in a heavy darkness that overwhelms all but the prophetic John the Baptist. This twisted, contorted Christ seems oddly contemporary with Grünewald's almost morbid interest in the physicality of suffering. In fact, this painting was frequently cited in relation to Mel Gibson's blood-soaked film, *The Passion of the Christ*. The image also contains some poignant theological symbolism, such as the blood of the lamb pouring into a chalice, which evokes both a biblical and liturgical context. This context is further established by the painting's place within an altarpiece that also contains Grünewald's exuberant depiction of Christ's glorious resurrection. Thus despite its almost macabre fascination with Christ's suffering, the hope of salvation is not overlooked.



Tintoretto, Jacopo (1518–1594). *Crucifixion*, 1565. Oil. La Sala dell'Albergo and Quadreria in La Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venezia, Italy.

Jacopo Tintoretto, *Crucifixion*

One of the great, and perhaps somewhat underappreciated, artists of the late Italian Renaissance is the superb artist Tintoretto. His canvases often portray religious subjects in large, dark, and dramatic spaces where the break-

ing light skillfully directs our eyes to the subject of the painting. His crucifixion scene is perhaps one of his most accomplished works.

Initially, one might be overwhelmed by the enormity of the event and the chaotic

activity surrounding Jesus. Horses dash this way and that. Workers busy themselves with their horrific tasks. Soldiers huddle in a corner gambling while passers-by gawk at the execution in progress. And yet Jesus rises above the din,

commandeering the space. The spiritual light that radiates from him powerfully overwhelms the cross and even gives him an authoritative aura despite the cruelty of his treatment. Even in death Tintoretto's Christ conveys strength.



Doménikos Theotokópoulos (El Greco), *Christ on the Cross*

If Tintoretto's painting is densely populated and dramatically lit, El Greco's crucifixion is much more quiet and subtle, filled as it is with spiritual light and mystical intuition. Trained in the Byzantine icon tradition, El Greco never lost the inherent sense of a world open to God's presence, even as his painting drifted into a unique mannerist style. The elongated figures, fractured sky, and other-worldly light all give a sense of God's immanence. Similar to Tintoretto's depiction of Christ, El Greco's use of subtle light that seems to radiate more from Christ than from any other light source gives us a sense that the world's darkness cannot "overcome" the light of Christ (John 1:5).

As El Greco's artwork is esteemed as some of Spain's most famous, it is difficult not to find, as some authors have, an affinity with one of Spain's most famous mystic poets, St. John of the Cross. John's interior life and "dark night of the soul" seem a thoughtful companion to El Greco's mystical crucifixion.

Theotokópoulos, Doménikos (El Greco, 1541-1614). *Christ on the Cross*, c. 1600-1610. Oil on canvas, 193 x 116 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Hanna Fund 1952.222.

Paul Gauguin, *The Yellow Christ*

With the advent of modern art, perceptions began to shift about art's purpose and meaning. Here the influence of thinkers such as Immanuel Kant and Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten can be discerned through artworks concerned much more with the unique subjective vision of the artist and the idea of "art for art's sake."

While Paul Gauguin certainly belongs more within the modernist camp, paintings like *The Yellow Christ* show his lifelong struggle with questions of ultimate meaning. In fact, Gauguin's crucified Christ almost appears like a reminder, or a question to be reevaluated.

Amidst the pious and dignified rural women of Gauguin's own time, Christ emerges as a testament to another way of thinking and being. Enlivened by Gauguin's Fauvist palette but nevertheless placed within a meditative pastoral setting, this crucifixion brings to the surface the question of the persistence of faith in the dawning of an industrialized and scientific age.

Gauguin, Paul (1848–1903). *The Yellow Christ*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 92.07 x 73.34 cm. General Purchase Funds, 1946. Albright-Knox Art Gallery/Art Resource, N.Y.



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Black Cross*

Twentieth-century American modern art would be hard-pressed to find a luminary brighter than Georgia O'Keeffe. Her unique vision and creative contributions that spanned her 99 years of life are a truly impressive accomplishment. Hers was a modernist aesthetic that favored abstraction, yet was nevertheless rooted in observation of the world around her. In *Black Cross* her usually vibrant palette is partially subdued. Matted blacks and muted purples contrast with a sliver of intense crimson. However, her virtuoso sense of composition is still on display with the dark cross asymmetrically cropped and obscuring the sky.

How does one interpret this monumental cross? Is it a condemnation of Christianity with its foreboding appearance and consuming presence? Does it evoke that forlorn moment after Christ has been removed from the cross and all hope seems to be setting like a distant sun? Whether condemnation or assurance, sorrow or disillusion, O'Keeffe's *Black Cross* continues to captivate with its powerful presence.

O'Keeffe, Georgia (1887–1986). *Black Cross*, New Mexico, 1929. Art Institute of Chicago, Art Institute Purchase Fund. ©The Art Institute of Chicago.

Marc Chagall, *White Crucifixion*

In a recent interview published in *America* magazine, Pope Francis identified Marc Chagall as one of his favorite artists. In particular, he singled out Chagall's heartbreaking masterpiece, *White Crucifixion*.

Chagall, unlike many of his artistic contemporaries, sought inspiration in his religious and cultural heritage. As a Russian-born artist of Jewish descent who lived through both world wars, Chagall's commitment to his heritage amidst so much persecution and suffering is edifying.

In *White Crucifixion* we see a world literally turned upside down by violence and war. The houses flipped over, the flames tearing through cities and synagogues, the people covering their eyes in horror—all of these images testify to the terrifying experiences the Jewish people endured during the Second World War. Chagall, who narrowly escaped Nazi-occupied France, places the crucified Christ in the middle of these unfolding atrocities.

In a powerful gesture of both solidarity and indictment, Chagall's deft depiction



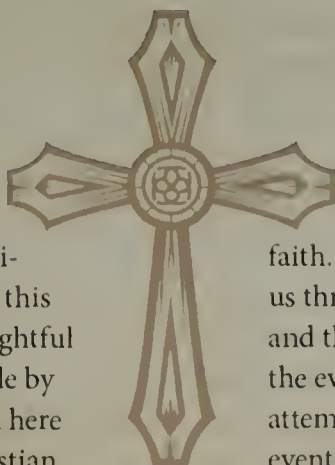
Chagall, Marc (1887–1985). *White Crucifixion*, 1938. Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Alfred S. Alschuler. ©2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

of Jesus highlights his Jewish identity. The painting then becomes a striking image of protest to anyone claiming to be Christian but perpetrating

such hatred and violence. It also offers a glimpse of comfort by depicting Jesus' solidarity with his own people. Unlike El Greco's

more mystical crucifixion, Chagall's crucifixion is a challenge to the meaning of Christian faith, that it must have real social consequences.

While this small sampling of crosses and crucifixion scenes barely scratches the surface of this genre, it does begin to familiarize us with the thoughtful social, spiritual, and theological contributions made by the artworks. The artists whose works are gathered here do more than remind us of past events in our Christian



faith. Their uses of light, color, and composition guide us through the paschal mystery, through the sorrow, and through the sacrifice. Through their art we can see the event in ways that we may not have considered and attempt to open for us the multifaceted significance of an event that changed the course of human history. **USC**

For us and for our salvation

What do we mean when we say that by Jesus' suffering and death we are healed—a mystery if ever there was one?

You might imagine that Father Donald Senior had always wanted to study the Bible, given that he is a world-renowned scripture scholar and a longtime member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. But you'd be wrong; what he really wanted to be was a missionary.

Back when Senior was studying to be a Passionist priest, one of the order's missionaries came to tell the students about his time as a chaplain in a leper colony off the coast of Korea. "I had dreams of doing just that—of being another Damian of Molokai, who gave his life in solidarity with the lepers he served," says Senior.

But in those days, he says, "religious communities handled assignments something like an arranged marriage." He was "asked" to plan on teaching scripture and sent off to Europe to begin his studies.

Senior has indeed spent his life as a missionary, albeit a different kind than he envisioned. He has brought the Jesus of the New Testament to the thousands who have heard him speak, read his books, taken his classes, traveled with him to the Holy Land, or attended Catholic Theological Union, which he headed for 23 years.

The man who didn't want to be a scripture scholar today considers it one of his greatest blessings. "In the beauty and power of the Jesus portrayed in the gospels," he says, "we who seek the face of God in our lives are given a sense of who God is, and there can find our hope."

The editors interview Father Donald Senior, C.P.

What do we know about what actually happened to Jesus at the time of his death?

Jesus died most likely around A.D. 30. He has had a public ministry for several years, and now he comes to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover festival. He's drawing crowds in a very dangerous situation. The Romans ruling Judaea had already been dealing with riots and unrest; there was increasing tension with Roman rule, particularly under Pilate.

Jesus comes into the city and goes to the Temple. He does some provocative prophetic act involving the Temple, purifying it, even predicting that it eventually might be taken down and replaced with something purer. If you go to Jerusalem today and stand on the Mount of Olives, you'll see that the Temple platform of Herod still dominates the city. You can understand how volatile it would have been for this Galilean peasant worker to come in and stir the whole thing up.

Why would the Jewish leaders at the time turn Jesus over to Pilate?

The Jewish religious leadership, particularly in Jerusalem, was in a way entrusted with maintaining public order by the Romans. Yes, there was Roman rule and



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Coeditor, *The Catholic Study Bible*
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a Roman procurator, but most of the time he was about 75 miles away in Caesarea Maritima. The Romans' message to the religious leaders was, "We're counting on you to keep the lid on things," particularly in the sacred precincts.

So when Jesus comes in with his road show, the religious leaders have trouble on their hands. In John 11:48, after Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, the chief priests get together and say, "If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation." The high priest, Caiaphas, tells them it's better "to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed."

What was at stake for Caiaphas?

That the Romans could do what they eventually did in A.D. 70—they besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple, which was the biblical equivalent to 9/11.

The great obsession of the Romans was public order. They particularly feared

rebellion and slave revolt. The Romans could be very punishing and intolerant; they could take the high priests out of office. So the religious leaders had a big stake in maintaining order.

It becomes a human drama involving Jesus. The chief priests have him arrested and then discuss, "What are we going to do?" They decide to take him to Pilate, who was the authority and who was in the city at the time. The gospels describe this meeting among the chief priests as a trial, but it was really more of a strategy session.

Then Jesus is turned over to the Romans, the chief players. We don't know if Pilate was as reluctant to execute him as is portrayed in the gospels. But he does say, "Take him yourselves and kill him." This shows Pilate's attitude: We know historically that there was no love lost between the Jewish leaders and Pilate.

Don't the gospels play down the role of the Romans?

In a sense, the Romans didn't count from

the point of view of the early Christians. Look at what Jesus has to say about the Romans in the gospels—almost nothing. They're like ciphers in the background.

Look at the Roman characters in Matthew and most other gospels—they're a mixed bag. The centurion is good, Pilate's wife seems like a good person, while Pilate is weak and vacillating. The soldiers do their job in crucifying Jesus.

What really counted for the early Christians was Jesus' relationship to Judaism. They were trying to see how they fit into the great heritage that Jesus represented. All the passion in the gospels is in Jesus' interaction with the Jewish leaders.

What would Jewish leaders have had against Jesus?

Well, Mark says this testimony is false, but the high priest accuses Jesus of blasphemy in that he claimed to be the son of God and claimed messianic authority.

They must have found something very difficult about Jesus. It could have

been his claims to religious authority. He was a layperson; he had no position. He was basically learned, but he wasn't a sage. Yet he was claiming quite a bit of authority in interpreting the law, in jousting with them.

How did this all lead to crucifixion?

The gospel tradition agrees with what we know of crucifixion from Greco-Roman records and such: the trial, the severe beating beforehand, the procession with the person carrying the cross, the means of impalement, the placards, a public setting. The Romans wanted crucifixion to have deterrent value for slaves and lower classes and those they called "strangers."

It wasn't a penalty for Roman citizens; it was given to rebels from outside who agitated against Roman order. Crucifixion was supposed to totally humiliate someone and repudiate their cause.

Why would Jesus deserve this worst form of Roman execution?

The crucifixion tells us that the impact of Jesus on his own community and as a potential threat to the Romans—even if the Romans didn't really believe it—had

enough weight that they would agree to this, because they didn't crucify just anybody. Jesus is not a Roman citizen.

In the gospels, his opponents accuse him of rebellion, of withholding taxes, and so on. Whether these were the actual charges against Jesus, they give a political cast to his religious program. It says that Jesus was really talking ultimately about the transformation of relationships.

This implies a powerful social and political impact. What he had to say and the symbolic actions he performed were a threat to public order, as perceived by those who wanted to keep control.

Picture the Romans: Who is this guy, claiming to be a king? He's got crowds coming in and he causes a riot at the Temple at the Passover. We've heard that Herod Antipas wanted to kill him, too. He critiques the rulers, he's stirring up the crowds. Let's just get rid of him.

In the minds of the Romans, then, he's a rabble-rouser?

Right, a rabble-rouser. This is actually an important theological issue, because the emphasis on atonement can take us into a lot of metaphors about what crucifixion

means. But the gospels emphasize that the reason Jesus was crucified is because of his ministry. The authorities decide to kill him because he's healing on the Sabbath and he's interpreting the law and he's confronting the leaders.

This connection between his mission and his crucifixion is what causes modern theologians to say that some expressions of atonement theology can be repugnant—the belief that God would be saying, "My anger is assuaged because you've destroyed my beloved Son, so that will pay for the debt you owe."

That's a caricature, of course, but what I find is that even for the New Testament authors who use sacrificial language, the driving force is not an angry God seeking vengeance. The driving force is God's love for the world that sends Jesus in the first place, not to die but to create life. Then Jesus faces the consequence, and that leads to metaphors of atonement.

Mark 10:45, for example, says, "The Son of Man came, not to be served but to serve, to give his life a ransom for the many." But "ransom" here is equivalent to serving. Jesus is serving, giving his

A "text of terror"

What do we do with Matt. 27:25, where the Jews say, "His blood be on us and on our children"? Hasn't that been used to justify Christian violence against Jews for centuries?

The phrase, also found in Deuteronomy, is a Jewish formula for accepting responsibility. This critique of the Jewish leaders by Matthew reflects the tension present after A.D. 70, when the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem.

Matthew sees that destruction of the Temple as divine punishment upon the leaders who rejected Jesus and who, in his view, were responsible for Jesus' death because they swayed the crowds against him. The destruction of the Temple was this tremendously traumatic event, and Matthew, trying to understand it from a theological point of view, interprets it as a consequence for the rejection of Jesus by those intervening generations of Jews.

Now while that's still pretty tough theology, what Matthew didn't include is "forever and ever." The responsibility applies only to certain generations in his view, but of course it's hard to get the subtlety of that across.

If you remember that Matthew's community had mostly Jews and thought of itself as Jewish, then it's pretty obvious that this line cannot be seen as a condemnation of Judaism.

But that text is a kind of "text of terror" if left uninterpreted. The Pontifical Biblical Commission says it's an obligation of Catholic preaching, when possible, to remind people of the historical context in which this all happened.

Some people have proposed editing the passion stories, especially at worship services, to avoid this problem.

I think that's a mistake. I understand the purpose, but I think the New Testament is like the incarnation: It's the beauty of the spirit of God in a human context. Human context is limited at times, historically inaccurate, acrimonious. You'd have a sanitized version instead of the scandalous reality that in the long run means more to us. We have to come to grips with these triple-sized texts of terror, wrestle with them, and put them again into this larger vision of how we relate to each other.

When you lay down your life for another, no one can say, “Well, that’s impressive, but what else have you got?”

life by healing, confrontations with evil, and exorcisms, and when the opposition reaches its climax against him, that’s the ultimate—he gives his life. Through his mission, he’s been giving his very being, the cup poured out for us, and in the crucifixion it reaches its final expression.

So how does Jesus suffer “for us”?

Here’s a way to think about atonement that’s helped me: In my family, when we’ve lost someone, the grief is not evenly distributed. Usually someone emerges in that moment who carries the rest of us, for a while anyway.

They’re the “suffering servant.” They carry more than their share of the suffering on behalf of the community. I think the early Christians saw Jesus that way—he bears more than his share, and by his sufferings, we are healed. Because of who he is, he bears it for the rest of humanity.

That’s why I would never dismiss atonement language in popular piety. There are people who are chronically ill, for example, who really think of the value of their suffering for somebody else. Who knows that they’re not correct? Not because God is cruel, but because we’re connected somehow.

When innocent people suffer, we may wonder, “Is there meaning in this? Are they strangely draining off for us the things we can’t bear?” It’s mysterious.

When John says that Jesus laid down his life for his friends, what did he mean?

John’s gospel says the raising of Lazarus causes the priests to condemn Jesus. Lazarus is someone Jesus loves as a friend. He comes and rescues Lazarus from death, not just from illness. In doing so, he is expending himself and risking himself for the sake of the other. Even when it brought opposition, he told

the truth, he healed the desperate.

His risking his life for the sake of those he loves becomes fully expressed in the crucifixion. It’s the unimpeachable human act. When you lay down your life for another, no one can say, “Well, that’s impressive, but what else have you got?” John seizes on it: “There is no greater love than this.”

How can we connect our own suffering to Jesus’ suffering?

I think of two gospel sayings: “Take up your cross” and “Bear your cross.”

The first brings to mind certain fidelities that we’re called to, certain commitments. It could cost us something to really be true to ourselves, true to our faith. We could suffer economically or even physically; we could suffer tension with our families. This is a suffering that is a result of our commitment.

There’s other suffering that is uninvited and more “bearing your cross”: illness, loss, disappointment in life, a broken relationship. We don’t control it, but we do have a part in what it means for us.

How so?

The scriptures speak of the number of ways in Christian tradition that suffering can be purifying. Suffering can tell us what counts and what doesn’t count. It exposes some false securities that we might have. If we’re faced with a serious illness, for example, it can be a source of discipline and wisdom.

Suffering is also a witness. The Letter of James speaks of anointing the person who suffers—the sacrament of anointing. Anointing gives the person a role. James speaks about the witness of the person who suffers in the community.

Suffering borne not necessarily in a heroic way but borne faithfully is a witness to how we confront our mor-

talities, what our deep virtues are, what humanness means. It puts the lie to false images of human beauty. Think of Jesus’ anguish in Gethsemane, his dignity, his bearing of the cross, his forgiveness, his compassion, his nonrecrimination, his prayer of trust. The passion narratives are a school of wisdom for human life because of the suffering of Jesus.

It’s also important to say that we Christians are against suffering before we’re for it. Our first response is not, “How lucky you are that you’re going to suffer.” Like Jesus himself, you eradicate suffering. You heal, you drive out the evil and confront it. But when suffering comes, you bear it with dignity and commitment, and value can come from that.

Was a big part of Jesus’ suffering that his friends deserted him?

I think of Jesus as a very vital human being and relatively young, full of energy and zeal. People were trusting him, touching him, and then to run smack into that wall and have the people around him basically abandon him—I think that was part of his acute suffering and brought up the question of meaning.

I sometimes wonder what kind of a story it would be if, when the guards came into the garden to arrest Jesus, the disciples said, “If you take him, you take us, too.” They’d have had to put them all on trial. When the authorities asked, “Are you his disciple?” they’d say, “You bet,” and they’d all get taken down to Pilate, so there would be 13 crosses. What would we do with that?

It would be a hero story, but there would be no connection to our own story of weakness and failure. In the gospels even Peter, who could be set up to be a superhero, is dropkicked at the very end. Paul is acutely embarrassed for his role in persecuting the church of God.

Founding literature almost always idealizes the first generation, but Christian literature does not. We can identify with these fallible people—that’s why these texts speak to us. **USC**



High and dry

Some of us take for granted the most precious resource of all. Lack of water harms families not only in the Third World, but also here at home.

It's 9 a.m. in the high desert of rural New Mexico, and the heat is already oppressive. People begin their day as you might expect: grabbing backpacks and heading to school, feeding goats and watering horses, patching holes in fences or crawling under cars to make small repairs. There is plenty to do.

In the distance a middle-aged woman ambles up to her porch for a break. She reaches over to a 20-gallon blue barrel, pries off the plastic covering coated in dust, and plunges her arm—up to the shoulder—into the round opening, scraping the bottom with a ceramic coffee mug. It's time for a drink of water.

By George McGraw, founder and executive director of the nonprofit organization DIGDEEP. To learn more about DIGDEEP and its Navajo Water Project, visit www.digdeepwater.org.

Most families in Smith Lake, New Mexico don't have a tap or a toilet at home. Life without clean water looks much the same as it did in 1868, when Navajo families were first settled on this reservation, the nation's largest. Infrastructure didn't develop naturally here, and pervasive poverty has kept these homes off the grid for generations.

In Smith Lake, the finite amount of clean water a person can collect every month determines everything. What they can't pull off a local water truck they'll haul from nearby ponds or livestock troughs. More than 40 percent of Navajo families live this way—tens of thousands of Americans.

Brenda Johnson watches the water delivery truck make slow progress up her hill as she places the mug at her feet. She whistles, and soon a parade of children emerge from the brown,

thinly painted trailer, each holding a cup, can, or bucket. The containers are lovingly arranged on the porch like a proud collection of trophies. The oldest of the girls runs out to greet Darlene Arviso—the Water Lady—and her yellow tanker.

Brenda shouts a warm greeting to Darlene in Diné as Darlene unfastens a clear plastic hose and opens the spigot. Water fills the first bucket. Not a drop is wasted as the hose passes to the next container.

Before Darlene finishes filling the second container (an empty detergent bottle), Brenda disappears into the house with her mug. She pours the clean water—again, carefully—into a small saucepan and sets it to boil over a gas jet. She begins to form tamales by hand, placing each husk into a foil-lined knapsack fixed with a small vendor’s license and her picture.

Brenda explains to Darlene that she’ll hitchhike to town and sell the tamales to buy gas. She hopes she’ll have just enough fuel to drive her small car to Albuquerque. Her husband, the only adult male in the household, has been in the hospital there for six months receiving treatment for a bacterial infection. His stay has been two weeks longer than necessary, since without clean water Brenda hasn’t been able to make and sell tamales, buy gas, and pick him up. When he returns, the 10-person household will have to work harder than ever to stretch the 400 gallons of clean water they’ve just received over the next 30 days. Darlene’s water truck serves 250 families from a well 70 miles away. She can visit each house only about once a month.

Water is everything. Brenda is constantly, quietly living this lesson that many Americans never have to learn. Clean water is the engine that drives every decision she makes. It determines the course of her day and the trajectory of her life.

Globally, more than 883 million people live in water poverty. While the average American uses up to 150 gallons a day to cook, clean, drink, and bathe, Brenda uses just under seven. In places like sub-Saharan Africa, many use less than two. Without reliable access to clean water, nearly 1 in 7 humans are forced to collect water from open sources like streams or ponds, causing them to sicken or die. At any given moment, 80 percent of the world’s hospital beds are filled with people suffering from waterborne illnesses. Dirty water kills more than 4,500 children a day.

Of course, access to water determines more than health. For families like Brenda’s, it determines access to the economy, time for education, and leisure. Because water collection is usually left to women and girls, access to water also determines gender equity and risk of sexual violence. But if water poverty creates a host of related problems, stifling human growth at every level,

the opposite is also true. Communities empowered by access to water make an incredible leap toward happier, healthier lives.

Every human being has a right to the clean water he or she needs to live with dignity. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, “The use of water—which is regarded as a universal and inalienable right—is related to the growing and urgent needs of those living in poverty, taking into account the fact that limited access to potable water has repercussions on the well-being of an enormous number of people.”

To a first-time visitor, conditions in Smith Lake are unexpected and overwhelming, but water poverty is not uncommon in the United States. About 13 percent of Native American homes lack access to clean water or sanitation. Compare that number to 0.6 percent, the average for non-Native Americans.

Migrant workers and the undocumented are affected, too. In places like Lowndes County, Alabama, anti-immigration laws are used to cut off water service to residents without a valid driver’s license. In California’s Coachella Valley, commer-

SAT Summer Sabbatical

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While the average American uses up to 150 gallons a day to cook, clean, drink, and bathe, Brenda Johnson uses just under seven.

cial farm workers are forced to live in squalid tenements with no sanitation service and unreliable access to water. Without recourse to the law for fear of deportation, their living conditions improve slowly, if ever.

There are more than 600,000 homeless men and women in the United States; most cannot rely on daily access to a tap or a toilet. In other parts of the world, the urban poor fare even worse. Since the early 1990s, slum dwellers in Latin America, South Asia, and Africa have suffered through aggressive utility privatization schemes, driving up water prices while degrading access. Private utilities might be better equipped to handle water delivery than local government, but they often lack the mechanisms that protect the poor from service cutoffs.

Each of these related challenges would surprise the average American. When most of us consider water poverty, we imagine the simple homes of the rural poor in places like Uganda. What we don't imagine are Native reservations, Southern suburbs, African prisons, or leper colonies—communities of people with equal dignity and incredible need, but where attention and funds are rarely directed.

Nor do we consider ourselves, our own need for clean water, and the ways we use (and abuse) it in our own homes. We haven't learned Brenda's lesson. And therein lies the problem.

For decades our response to water poverty has been a charitable one. We've raised funds and drilled wells, but we haven't made much progress. Water projects still fail more than 50 percent of the time, dragging the people they were meant to serve back into poverty. Whole communities of men and women who don't fit neatly into our idea of the "deserving poor" (think of those prisons and reservations) are simply ignored.

As Catholics, the problem of water poverty—and the inadequacy of our response—is undeniably a social justice issue. But what should we be doing differently?

In last year's interview published in *America* magazine, Pope Francis described a debilitating lung infection that struck him as a young man. The antibiotic prescribed by his doctor wasn't enough to save him, so his nurse (an enterprising nun) tripled the dose without authorization, saving his life. Francis' nurse knew him better than his doctor did; her proximity to Francis and his illness brought a solution into focus. "Reflection, for us, must always start from experience," the pope said.

Mass market "charity" tends to keep us as cold, analytical outsiders. We separate ourselves into groups: donors versus recipients; haves versus have-nots. But a Christian approach

to social justice encourages personal engagement and an understanding of our equality, created (as we are) in the same image and likeness. A charitable disposition in the truest sense requires more of us than our resources. It requires an investment of our attention, our prayers, and our personal choices as well. Our response must be the same as that brave sister's.

DIGDEEP, a nonprofit organization that works to defend the human right to water, is drilling a new 2,000-foot well in the middle of Smith Lake. Hundreds of American families, churches, and community groups will help to make this work possible. From the new well, Darlene's water truck, and more like it, will deliver enough clean water to meet international human rights standards. Local spigots will provide access to water in emergencies, and the leadership of community members like Brenda will ensure the project's long-term sustainability.

I have personally witnessed the failure of some multinational aid organizations in responding to the needs of the people experiencing water poverty. In fact, it was my experience of a failed water project in Afghanistan that prompted me to start DIGDEEP in the first place. Fortunately, the number of organizations (many of them native-run) taking a new, personal approach to water rights is growing, including such incredibly dedicated local groups like AFRINET in rural Cameroon and St. Bonaventure Indian Mission in Thoreau, New Mexico. Even larger organizations are beginning to reevaluate their values and approach.

DIGDEEP treats people with access to water not as donors, but as equal stakeholders. We challenge individuals to understand the importance of water in their lives, so that they can begin to use that experience to connect with people living in water poverty as equals.

Poverty is an immense problem, but the problem of poverty shouldn't feel distant or unfamiliar. Brenda has a zip code. You can call her on the phone, send her a letter, even enroll your kids in her local school. It's time we begin to treat water poverty as our problem, by understanding and defending a human right we all have in common. When we make the decision to start, we won't have far to go. **USC**

ontheweb

Visit uscatholic.org for tips on how to conserve water in your parish.

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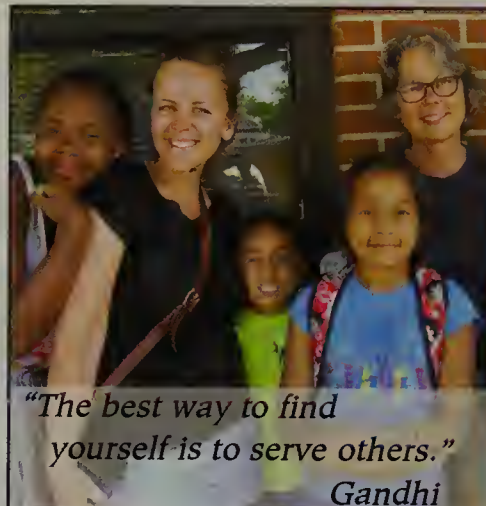
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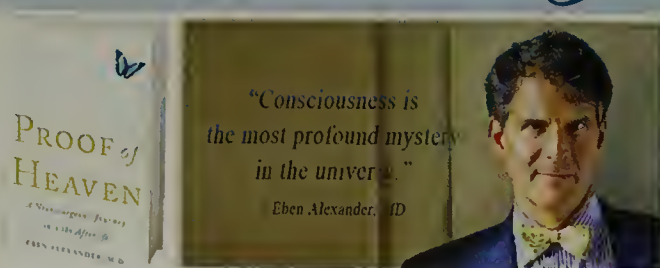


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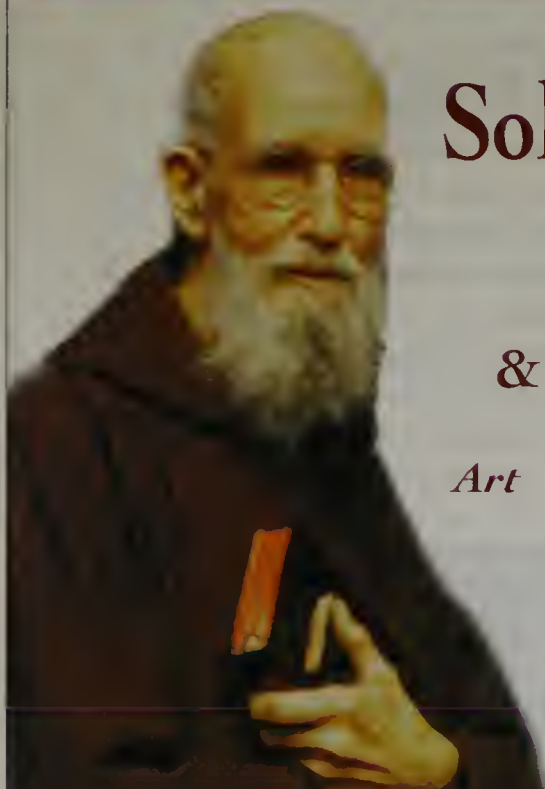
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Compassion without borders

Migrant deaths in the desert of America's Southwest have been a well-documented ongoing tragedy, but 2013 was an especially brutal year for migrants all over the world. According to a conservative December estimate from the International Organization for Migration, more than 7,000 migrants may have perished at sea or while crossing deserts in 2013—the deadliest year on record. Adding to the hundreds who perish along the U.S. border, migrants have been lost on the deserts of North Africa and the Middle East. Hundreds drown each year in the waters off the coast of Italy.

An unknowable number of children are among the casualties. Many migrants travel as broken family units, mothers with children seeking to reunite with a husband and father. More heart-breaking is the phenomenon of migrant children and teens making their way alone to the U.S. border, enduring a gauntlet of predators and deprivation in the long journey by foot or on the top of a rail car from South or Central America.

The deaths of migrant children fleeing dangerous conditions is no minor issue.

A report from the U.S. bishops' Office of Migration and Refugee Services notes that the number of unaccompanied minors reaching the United States has been escalating rapidly and warns of an impending "surge" of such children—perhaps as many as 60,000—in 2014. That figure is more than twice the 2013 number, and in 2004 as few as 6,000 made the attempt. What is driving children as young as 5 years old into such a perilous flight?

Perhaps as many as 95 percent, according to the report, come from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—nations where street violence, organized crime, drug cartels, and corruption have become a plague on the vulnerable and powerless. Kevin Appleby, director of migration policy and public affairs for the bishops and an author of the report, told *The Wall Street Journal* that these unaccompanied minors represent a different type of migrant.

"These children defy common perceptions of migration in this hemisphere," he said. "They are

akin to refugees in Africa fleeing civil wars. They are literally fleeing for their lives."

The church has long demanded a compassionate response to people in transit because of economic or political oppression. While it acknowledges the right, even the obligation, of sovereign states to control their own borders, it has consistently argued that the jobless and hopeless have a morally legitimate claim over concerns of legality and citizenship. Solidarity recognizes no borders. As capital ebbs and flows in search of profit, so do the world's desperate poor seek out bread where it can be found—and have a moral right to do so.

This has been a hard message for many American Catholics to accept. After a few generations in this new world, many have forgotten the struggle and suffering endured by their own immigrant ancestors; many believe the rule of law somehow overrides the Christian call to mercy and the church's firm commitment to a preferential option for the poor.

Beginning with his prayerful appearance on the island of Lampedusa, where many migrants into Europe first land if they survive the ocean crossing, Pope Francis has made a consistent effort to emphasize the requirement of Christian solidarity and charity with the world's migrants. He told a group of refugees and immigrants in January, "You are close to the heart of the church because the church is a people journeying toward the kingdom of God."

But in addition to keeping migrants close to our hearts, American Catholics can pressure their representatives in Congress to get our legal and economic house in order. These horrific deaths in transit are partly a by-product of years of failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform. There are legal remedies which can normalize the status of millions of people and create reasonable—and most important, safe—openings to the movement of our brothers and sisters from the south and to protect the children traveling among them. **USC**

By Kevin Clarke, a writer living in New York.



Art versus artist

Can you enjoy a song or movie without supporting the person who created it? Let your conscience be your guide.

Last summer I found myself in a Twitter debate with the well-respected music critic and writer Jessica Hopper. The Pitchfork Music Festival in Chicago had just ended, with Chicago native and R&B legend R. Kelly closing the Sunday lineup, essentially headlining the entire three-day festival. It was a controversial appearance given Kelly's alleged history of sexually predatory behavior and the close proximity of the festival to the homes of many of his accusers. To his critics, it seemed as if Pitchfork's organizers and attendees that night were not only approving of Kelly, but doing so in mere walking distance from where several of his accusers live.

Hopper covers artists who might not fit mainstream sensibilities, and when her subject is a Taylor Swift or Lorde, she examines not just whether the music is appealing but how the acts can or can't speak to and for teens and young women.

I was shocked then when I saw a tweet from Hopper that referenced her feminist perspective, emphasized how much she "LOVED" the performance, as well as claimed she hasn't financially supported Kelly since he was accused of sex with minors. Without thinking, I immediately tweeted back, "Your word is support. What r u saying to the young women who look up to you? No to rape culture unless rapist puts on a good show?"

I use the term "rape culture" because Hopper herself often uses the expression in her writing to reference the cultural climate which not only tends to listen more attentively to the side of accused rapists and abusers over the victims of sexual assault and rape, but also often implies that women somehow invite predatory sexual attention, because "boys will

By Meghan Murphy-Gill, a writer living in Chicago.

be boys.” I thought it was disingenuous for a woman with a fairly large Twitter following, especially of girls around the same age of Kelly’s accusers, to emphasize publicly how much she enjoyed the show.

Our back and forth conversation—limited to 140 characters per tweet—stalled at the question of whether or not it’s necessary to separate the consumption of art from knowledge of the artist’s personal character and behavior. Hopper tweeted that being a feminist and music lover is complicated, and occasionally you have to draw a truce between the art and artist. For me, given the nature of Kelly’s art (his songs are about sex, which numerous witness statements claim is even part of the making of his albums), this wasn’t a complicated case. I can’t draw such a truce.

Whether or not we ought to consider the artist when consuming art is a question that another journalist, former *Chicago Sun-Times* music critic Jim DeRogatis—who has been covering the allegations and legal proceedings against Kelly for 14 years—asked repeatedly in a series of interviews and articles called the *Kelly Diaries* for WBEZ radio in Chicago, which came out in the weeks leading up to Pitchfork. (In the interest of full disclosure, my husband worked with DeRogatis on the series.) Unfortunately, DeRogatis’ work was largely ignored, even after a recent change in attitudes among the music community; Hopper included, toward Kelly after Hopper interviewed DeRogatis for the *Village Voice*.

Citing a private conversation with DeRogatis about the victims he’d gotten to know and the realization of her role model status for young women, Hopper decided that it was important she join DeRogatis in publicly taking a stand against Kelly. Following her lead, many other pop culture critics and commentators also changed their perspective, several of whom wrote essays about why they weren’t going to listen to Kelly anymore.

When Woody Allen received the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the Golden Globes in January for lifetime achievement, the question “Should we consume art made by bad people?” rose again. Allen’s daughter with Mia Farrow, Dylan, accused Allen of sexual abuse when she was 7 years old, a scandal most fans had either forgotten about or never even knew of until Mia Farrow and her son tweeted their disgust during the awards show this year.

Since then, the conversation has largely focused on Allen’s guilt or innocence and whether or not society should presume that the accuser or accused

is telling the truth. That’s an important question, one that eventually should lead Allen’s fans to ponder what it means to enjoy his films given the cloud that surrounds them. Like Kelly, Allen has only been accused, but never convicted, of sex crimes and likely never will be. The fixation on his innocence or guilt may ultimately be futile, but not the consideration of how or if we can ever enjoy *Manhattan* again, or see this year’s Oscar-nominated *Blue Jasmine*.

The list of artists whose work is under similar clouds is unfortunately long. Off the top of my head, I can name at least four more: James Brown, Roman Polanski, Chris Brown, and Michael Jackson. I’d be lying if I said I didn’t enjoy the work of each, and the decision whether or not to consume or support, whether financially or in my writing, is not easy. Of course, it’s easier to boycott and just ignore the art made by sexual predators. What about when an artist is said to be connected to causes we find morally repugnant, such as composer Richard Wagner with Nazism or author Rudyard Kipling with anti-Irish sentiment?

Art is enjoyable, and having to consult my values every time I consume can be exhausting. Indeed, getting overly moralistic about consumption of anything can be downright paralyzing. But as Catholics, we are asked to consider the impact of our choices in matters of food, where we live, and what clothes we buy, so why not art as well?

As DeRogatis wrote in the *Village Voice* earlier this year: “Why? Because art matters. Because criticism and context matter. Because crimes against women and children matter. And because the conversation matters. It’s about time we had it.” **USC**

As Catholics, we are asked to consider the impact of our choices in matters of food, where we live, and what clothes we buy, so why not art as well?

quicktakes

Films about the personal lives of artists:

Surviving Picasso
(Merchant Ivory Productions, 1996)



Pollock
(Brant-Allen, 2000)



Frida
(Handprint Entertainment, 2002)



watch

THE MONUMENTS MEN

Directed by George Clooney (Columbia Pictures, 2014)



They didn't storm the beaches at Normandy or liberate Paris. But the real-life "Monuments Men"—a special unit tasked with recovering masterpieces of art that the Nazis had stolen as they took over Europe—may have been just as important to the war effort, or so George Clooney's latest film claims.

Clooney himself stars as Frank Stokes, the leader of a group of museum curators and scholars who find themselves whisked off to basic training. The movie can seem hokey at times, with forced-sounding 1940s dialogue and language barriers disappearing when convenient. But where the film truly shines is the all-star cast. The Monuments Men—played by Matt Damon, Bill Murray, John Goodman, Jean Dujardin, Hugh Bonneville, and Bob Balaban—project true camaraderie, though it's worth noting the men would not have been nearly as successful without the help of the only female character, played by a shrewd Cate Blanchett.

It's unfortunate, then, that the group doesn't appear as a unit more often. The men were essentially split up into pairs, and the first portion of the film is spent jumping across European locales. Viewers may want to brush up on European geography to help keep track of who is pursuing what and where.

Catholics may especially appreciate the focus on two famous pieces of art that are themselves main characters in the film: the Ghent Altarpiece and Michelangelo's *Madonna of Bruges*. In a particularly moving scene, as Bonneville helps Belgian priests barricade the church that houses the *Madonna* against the Nazis, one priest stops to ask if Bonneville is Catholic. Bonneville pauses and responds, "I am tonight."

The mission was not without loss—of art or of the men themselves—and there are traces of the unspeakable tragedy of the Holocaust. It only reinforces the film's message: Our culture was worth the ultimate sacrifice.

—Elizabeth Lefebvre

listen

INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS

Various Artists (Nonesuch, 2013)



The songwriter is dead. Long live the songwriter. The *Inside Llewyn Davis* soundtrack comes from the 2013 film of the same name by Ethan and Joel Coen. The film and its music ride on the trend of popular music with songs that are not

exactly country, not exactly folk, and not exactly Americana. Instead it's an era, according to producer T-Bone Burnett, that belongs to the songwriter. Think Taylor Swift, Marcus Mumford, Adele, the Lumineers.

Burnett collaborated with the Coen Brothers to produce an album that largely serves as a musical score. And while it stands on its own without the film, there are moments—particularly, "Please Mr. Kennedy"—that are too bouncy, unrestrained, and even silly to cohesively play with the subtlety of the rest of the collection. But as in another Burnett-produced album for the Coen Brothers—namely, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*—it's not difficult to give the collection a little room considering the greatness behind the work.

The film's lead is played by Oscar Isaac, and, accordingly, the soundtrack centers on his vocals. Isaac is a capable singer, but there's something missing in his voice—a sharp edge or a charisma the listener can hang their hat on. He gets the job done, but the album's X-factor belongs to contributions from the Punch Brothers, Marcus Mumford, Justin Timberlake, and the Bob Dylan song, "Farewell."

At first, *Inside Llewyn Davis* risks sounding like an album made for folksy fans who really like songs that include the phrase "fare thee well." But like the rest of the Coen Brothers' creations, what's good about the soundtrack is the world it creates. *Inside Llewyn Davis* is an album that really shines with the isolation and acute attention some earbuds and an iPod demand. To maximize enjoyment, hole up with a headset as a portal to this latest Coen Brothers' world.

—Molly Jo Rose

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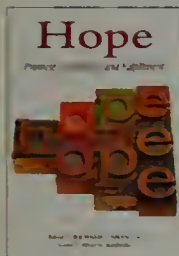
Old age can become the opportunity to discover certain aspects or new possibilities of existence and to live them fully. Our body weakens, but from the spiritual point of view, we can continue to progress until our last day.

—Leo E. Missinne in *In This Life: Spiritual Growth and Aging* (Liguori, 2013)

”

HOPE

Edited by Richard Lennan et al. (Paulist, 2013)



Hope: Promise, Possibility, and Fulfillment is a collection of essays that is the product of a unique collaborative effort by faculty members of the School of Theology and Ministry at Boston College. While each author reflects on the concept of hope from the perspective of their area of expertise, they also had access to

drafts of the other authors' contributions while they were writing. The result is a collection that truly feels like a dialogue.

Early in the book Dominic Doyle provides some helpful conceptual clarity by reflecting on the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. A Christian accepts in faith that the goal toward which her life is oriented is love, the fullness of which is union with God. Hope is the longing for that goal, a goal toward which we are traveling but which we do not yet possess. To live in hope is to avoid both the presumption that we will certainly attain the goal and the despair that we will never do so.

Hope therefore has a deeply affective dimension, and many of the contributions tease out the insights of this for spirituality and pastoral counseling. Colleen Griffith notes that hope is both a grace and a choice. Cultivating hope requires the spiritual practice of regularly turning to God and being attentive to the movements of the Holy Spirit. Philip Browning Helsel offers strategies to help counselors awaken hope for a positive future in individuals who feel trapped in a negative present.

Christian hope, however, is more than a desire for individual salvation. John Sachs writes that hope is "not about a salvation away from this world but about God's coming to dwell in the cosmos, redeeming, transforming, and making it new." Jesuit Father Thomas Massaro argues that our hope for a better world must be made effective in the present by concrete efforts to remedy injustice. These writers remind us that hope has a historical and cosmic dimension that looks toward a future that encompasses all of humanity and creation itself. —J. Peter Nixon

MERCY IN THE CITY

By Kerry Weber (Loyola, 2014)



Kerry Weber has set the bar for Lenten fasts extraordinarily high in *Mercy in the City*. In her concise, quick moving, and often funny book, Weber chronicles her experience of giving up sweets, alcohol, and—the real kicker—trying to complete all the corporal works of mercy in the 40(ish) days before Easter.

Weber, an editor at *America* magazine, was researching correctional facilities and Catholicism one day when she landed upon a list of the corporal works of mercy—a list she had known by heart back in grade school, but hadn't considered much of late. "I realized the path of mercy was one I needed to walk more deliberately," she writes, citing the difficulties that life in New York City often bestows, such as the incessant requests for money or food from people on the subway or the street. "I was afraid I'd stopped seeing Christ in people."

At the beginning of her Lenten journey, Weber worries that people might think her overly pious or insincere for attempting such a feat, but it quickly becomes clear that she is neither. Instead we get a portrait of a down-to-earth, funny, and tenacious young Catholic, a Mercy Volunteer Corps alumna and an RCIA sponsor, who's making the most of Lent.

Her efforts that seem the most fruitful (feeding the hungry on a breadline in Manhattan, clothing the naked by staffing the clothing room at a Catholic Worker house, visiting the imprisoned at San Quentin State Prison in California) contrast with some that seem a bit contrived (giving drink to the thirsty New York City half marathon runners). But Weber seizes each experience as an opportunity for deep reflection, and by Easter she has amassed many keen insights. The most fundamental one is that, "This experience has helped me to see how much my faith must be a choice, how easy it is to become complacent, the need to remind myself to respond to the call of my faith each day. There are so many ways to say yes." —Heather Grennan Gary

Perspective: The Calm Within the Storm by Robert J. Wicks (Oxford, 2014)

Wicks provides his readers with practical advice for regaining balance and a healthy sense of perspective during stressful situations in life. Combining wisdom and experience, Wicks aims to give a greater sense of gratitude for the little things in life.



St. Peter's B-List edited by Mary Ann B. Miller (Ave Maria Press, 2014)

In this collection of more than 100 contemporary poems, Miller offers readers a chance for self-reflection through beauty and humor in poetry about the saints. These poems give the saints a down-to-earth and deeply human feel.



Citizen of the World: Suffering and Solidarity in the 21st Century by Donald H. Dunson and James A. Dunson III (Thomas Nelson, 2013)

How do Christians respond to the moral obligation to be in solidarity with the poor and underprivileged in our world today? The Dunsons explore this and other vexing questions in their book.





Einzig Christi in Jerusalem, Wilhelm Morgner via Wikimedia Commons published before 1923 and public domain in the U.S.

Pray anything

When it comes to prayer, sometimes you just need a guide to help you choose the right words.

Most days of the year, I have no problem summoning up content for a short session of morning prayer. On Sundays, my habit is to give thanks for good things that have happened lately. On Fridays, I pray for those I've loved who have died—a list that grows longer every year. The rest of the week, I do what comes most naturally to human beings, I suppose. I worry out loud to God about everything and everybody.

Our daily prayer routines may be attached to the framework of published liturgical prayers, but for lots of us the meat of our communion with God is pretty free form. We don't need a preprinted checklist from the Vatican in order to

remind God of all the places in the world erupting in violence, threatened by natural disasters, or suffering the brutal effects of having bad governments or poorly managed ecosystems. All we have to do is follow the news cycles.

We also need no prompting from the Catholic calendar to remember to pray for family members who are sick, friends in need, and our own long roll call of anxieties. These matters weigh on our thoughts and feelings all the time.

Spontaneous prayer is seldom beautifully

*By Alice Camille, author of *Seven Last Words* (ACTA Publications) and other titles available at alicecamille.com.*

formed or lyrically phrased. These are workaday intercessions and laments that won't make it into anyone's sacred texts. Since they're often words whispered into the dark at home or silently offered during the commute, they don't have to impress anyone. They just have to communicate, however inarticulately, that we're scared or mad or discouraged or distressed. And we want to tell God about it, because we trust that God cares and can do something to help. When it comes to prayer, no grades are given for perfect grammar or creative expression. The only standard that counts is honesty.

Yet there are times when even the most ragged spontaneous prayers are beyond us. When an hour of crisis comes to someone I love who's far away, I reach for a rosary and work those beads, letting the ancient prayers of the church do their job. My mind is rarely on the words or even the beads. I'm really fingering the crisis itself, and my thoughts are riveted to the person in need. When I finish a round, I feel like God and I have understood each other completely. Call it praying in tongues for the tongue-tied. After a good rosary, nothing seems left unsaid.

In a similar way, the psalms of the Bible stand through the centuries as go-to prayers for those who need to pray but can't find the words. With a catalog of 150 to choose from, there's one for every occasion. Some are prayers of praise, for the times when an ode to joy just seems right. Psalms of thanksgiving are like a box of Hallmark cards to send to God for help rendered. Psalms of trust review the historical reasons why God can be relied on: God did it before, and will come through for us again! Psalms of lament are a religious way to complain, and psalms of intercession are a form of spiritual nagging. Our tradition gives us the impression that God honors all of these conversations and is poised to hear us out in every one.

So when Jesus hangs on the cross in his final hours of anguish, even he mentally reaches for the prayers his people had been lifting up since the time of David. Now, the gospels convince us that Jesus has no trouble fashioning his own conversations with God. Jesus prays—a lot. Frequently he goes into the hills at night, or departs to the desert for days on end, praying and fasting.

On demand, Jesus constructs a prayer for his disciples that illustrates the elements of cos-

mic communion: what we know as the Lord's Prayer. He teaches his friends to pray often and persistently, even occasionally to bully God for a response when the cause is just, as in the case of the widow who won't let the judge get a good night's sleep. Jesus also notes the essential ingredient of humility in prayer, as when the tax collector and the Pharisee employ different tactics in addressing God at the Temple.

Jesus storms heaven with prayers in the garden of Olives just before his arrest, and he demonstrates no sense of being at a loss for words in his hour of great anguish. But from the cross, he chooses to shout out Psalm 22 instead: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The rabbis held that King David composed this psalm in the 10th century B.C., anticipating the exile of Israel centuries later. Psalm 22 is a lament composed of four parts. It begins where people in distress *must* begin: exposing our suffering, along with the fear it unleashes. Pain frightens us because it's a departure from what we expect as the faithful people of God.

The second part of Psalm 22 concerns what we're up against: "enemies" by any other name. Any source of suffering great enough to shake our confidence in God's friendship really is the enemy. This adversary is described in wild, shifting, inhuman terms: It's a mighty bull, a tearing lion, a threatening pack of dogs. From every form of evil and destruction, may God rescue us still!

The third phase of the psalm is a confident invitation to celebrate the God who answers every prayer and remains faithful to his friends. The final expression is a universal chorus of praise, as "all the ends of the earth" acknowledge that God proves worthy of our trust.

Along with the four "chapters" of this psalm, a few significant elements are meaningfully paired. Place and time have a role in the saga of human suffering, because while God resides in the sublime, unlimited, and eternal heavens, we mortals are staked to time and place and can't elude what attacks us in our realm of particular hours and inescapable geography. Jesus, bound to the cross, cannot pretend away that on this fateful Friday outside of Jerusalem's hard walls, he's nailed to wood and bloodied and dying. God is

When Jesus hangs on the cross in his final hours of anguish, even he reaches for the prayers his people had been lifting up since the time of David.

nowhere to be seen in this place—"far from my cry"—and the divine presence peculiarly absent from this hour: "I cry by day, but you do not answer / by night, but find no rest." Whatever God has in store three days from now, it's not happening on Good Friday.

But this same temporal realm that once seemed deserted by God will prove full of divine purpose. God is in fact never distant: "All the ends of the earth" testify to divine goodness in the end. In the same way, verses 30-32 highlight the past,

present, and future witness to divine justice in those who have died, those still living, and generations yet to come. The psalm ends in confident victory: "The Lord's fame shall be proclaimed to the generation to come... for he has done it."

Jesus knew this psalm by heart, as did the evangelists who record this saying from the cross. Every breath from the cross was labored and difficult, so economy of speech was necessary. With a single line from a well-chosen psalm, once more Jesus teaches his disciples, in the most traumatic hour of life, how to pray. **USC**



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Can women participate in the Holy Thursday washing of the feet?

In 1955, Pius XII reformed the liturgy to make foot washing part of the Holy Thursday Mass. Since the 14th century, it had been practiced in a separate liturgy. Then last year, the newly elected Pope Francis decided to celebrate Holy Thursday by washing the feet of inmates—including women, Muslims, and Orthodox Christians—at a Roman juvenile detention center, causing some to fret that the pope set a questionable example. According to Vatican spokesman Father Federico Lombardi, Francis took into account "the real situation, the community where one celebrates."

In the 1980s, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy stated it is customary for women to participate in the washing of feet. The committee was writing in response to questions about the language in the Sacramentary's rubric for Holy Thursday that only refers to "selected men" (*virī selecti*).

Confusion surrounding the washing of feet is understandable given that our contemporary rite has its roots in one of the most enigmatic scenes of the New Testament. Only the Gospel of John describes Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Many biblical scholars think the scene was written later than the rest of the gospel by an unknown author. Some believe it was added to teach John's audience, a group facing violent opposition both from other followers of Jesus as well as the Roman gov-

ernment, to prepare for martyrdom. Just as Jesus washed his followers' feet, a prerequisite for entering the Temple, his followers must cleanse themselves spiritually to stand before God.

The early Christian authors Tertullian and Augustine both mention foot washing, and it likely became a liturgical rite between the fifth and seventh centuries. Documents from the Council of Toledo in 694 stated the practice had fallen into disuse in some areas and that it needed to be restored as part of the Holy Thursday celebration.

During the Middle Ages, understanding of the gospel's foot washing episode changed; the emphasis on ritual cleansing and martyrdom faded, and an emphasis on humility and service emerged. The image of someone powerful doing the work of a slave, stooping to wash the lowest part of the body, resonated in the medieval world where most people spent all day on their feet engaging in hard labor. Foot washing rites spread outside the church, as European monarchs also began washing the feet of their poorest subjects and giving gifts of money, food, and clothing on Holy Thursday. Both the Catholic Mary I and her Protestant sister Elizabeth I washed the feet of poor laywomen during elaborate ceremonies in 16th-century England.

Pope Francis' actions may have set a new example, but they are following an even older one. Holy Thursday foot washing—of men and women—has been shaped by the needs and beliefs of the Christian community dating back to John's gospel. **USC**

By Kathleen Manning, an author and researcher living in Chicago.



Get on the road

A few years ago, on an incongruously cushy tour bus with plentiful opportunities for shopping, I made a pilgrimage to Assisi. We had Mass every day and visited the sites where St. Francis lived. I chose to enter into the experience, however, on what I hoped would be a deeper level.

I made the lonely climb up Mount Subasio outside Assisi and crawled into a cave, just as Francis and his brothers would have done. I ran through the woods at La Verna, where Francis received the wounds of Christ, finding crevasses in the mountain where I imagined the saint took refuge from the cold. I ate very little and spent no money, accepting only what was provided as part of the

trip. I prayed constantly. I felt that I connected with the life of St. Francis—

and therefore with Christ, whom he sought to imitate. The trip changed my life.

For thousands of years, pilgrims have traveled to places brimming with spiritual value—for Christians, often places connected to the lives of Christ, Mary, or the saints. In the centuries before the airplane, the locomotive, and the automobile, traveling to these destinations usually meant a prolonged journey of anywhere from several weeks to a year. Travelers made the trips for many reasons: to ask for divine aid, to fulfill a religious obligation, or to venerate an important place or object.

By Linda Monitello, regional formation director for the St. Maximilian Kolbe Region of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Historically, the journey has been as important as the destination. Pilgrims took a lengthy break from their daily routines. They left their families and work environments, entering into a new community of people. In this new group, everyone was equal, no matter how much money or status they possessed.

Along the way, pilgrims had time to reflect on their lives back home. They were free to let go of their current situations and seek interior conversion. The destination became the center of their world, where they hoped to directly encounter God.

The road less traveled

After Jesus' death and resurrection, his followers gathered in places associated with his life and ministry. The sites in Jerusalem were destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, to be restored by St. Helena, who arrived in the third century with her Roman engineers to build shrines at the holy places.

Egeria, a fourth-century Gallic nun on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, provided in her letters an eyewitness account, with details about the holy sites and descriptions of the liturgies celebrated there.

Pilgrims began to bring back religious objects from the Holy Land, such as pieces of the true cross, to Rome and to other places for veneration, creating new pilgrimage destinations throughout Europe.

The Way of St. James to Santiago de Compostela, Spain reigned in medieval times as one of the most popular pilgrimages, alongside Rome and the Holy Land. Shrines built at Guadalupe, Lourdes, Fatima, and elsewhere honored newer Marian apparitions. As we keep seeking physical encounters with God, pilgrimages will continue to grow in number and popularity.

Everyone
at Lourdes
was equal
before God,
no matter
their physical
or financial
state of
being.

Pilgrims, by embarking on an exterior, physical journey, take an interior journey as well. Pilgrimages work because they address a fundamental human principle: We use our experiences of the perceivable created world to connect with the creator, whom we cannot see. This is the sacramental principle, and the foundation of our faith.

Pilgrimages continue to function as an important tool for spiritual growth. Modern methods of travel, however, have changed them.

Last summer, for example, I took my teenage son to Lourdes, France. While we didn't spend a lengthy, arduous journey reflecting on our destination, we did have several months prior to our departure to anticipate what we would see and experience when we arrived.

But we were not, in fact, prepared. We cried as we watched scores of sick people being wheeled one at a time into the grotto where our Blessed Mother had appeared. We were moved by the faith of so many who had come to this sacred site expecting to experience God's healing love.

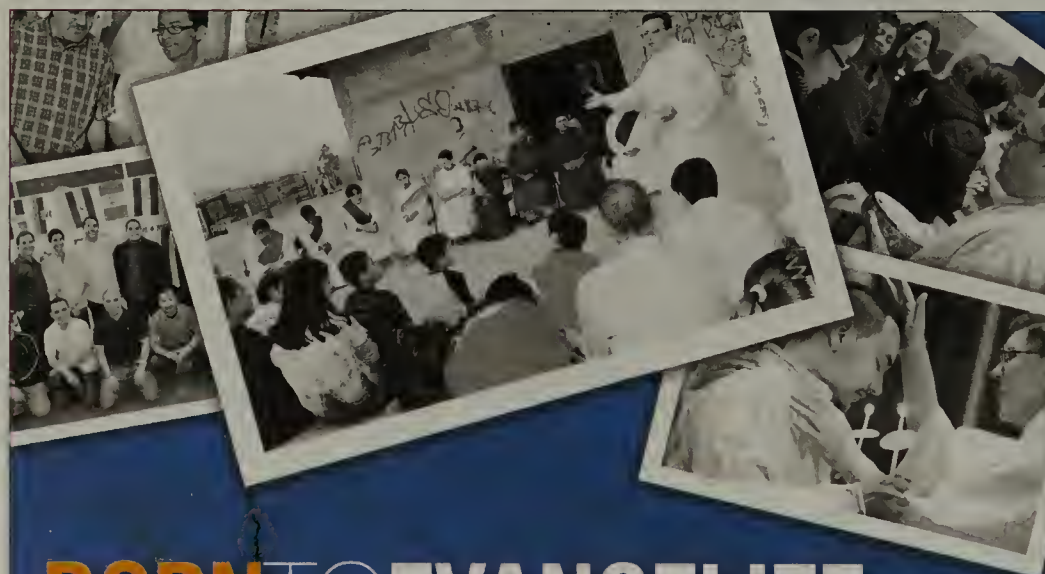
During the candlelight rosary procession, as we prayed in different languages with thousands of other pilgrims, we encountered firsthand the global nature of our faith and our Catholic heritage; we felt an unforgettable sense of community. Everyone there was equal before God, no matter their physical or financial state of being.

You can make a pilgrimage without spending much money or traveling a great distance. For many years I have traveled to Trappist, Kentucky to be a guest of the Cistercian monks for a week, or sometimes just for a weekend. It's always well worth the trip; the grounds as well as their inhabitants are inspiring. The monks have taught me that we all need to spend time in silence with the Lord, no matter where we are. The monastery wall is not to keep out the world but to provide a place of quiet. The cloistered religious, as professionals of asceticism and prayer, can teach us how we can better communicate with God.

Pilgrimages need not focus only on religious sites. The key is to recognize that you are in a sacred space where God's nearness becomes much clearer to you. This happened last weekend as I sat by a waterfall during a family vacation to the Finger Lakes region of New York. Spellbound, I studied the intricate rock formations beneath the falling water. As I contemplated the vast and continuing work of creation, I needed no prompting to sense God's power and imagination.

As human beings, we need physical experiences to help us better understand what we cannot come to know through our senses. We are on a journey back to God, and we are not yet fully at home. While made in the image of God, we must grow into his likeness by following the path of Christ. His journey led him to Jerusalem and through the cross into new life. Our journey leads us on the same path.

Pilgrimage journeys are physical enactments of this quest. We need to make difficult climbs, hide away in caves for moments of quiet prayer, and run with abandon to the God who always waits for us. **USC**



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Drop how you shop

Samantha, an executive for a Fortune 100 company and mother of two, loves to shop. While her job requires her to be nicely dressed, Samantha admits that she also often uses shopping as recreation. She brings her children shopping with her, and as a reward for waiting patiently while she tries on clothes and looks at jewelry, she'll buy them a new toy, gadget, or outfit.

"Just lately, I've started to wonder what I'm teaching them," she says. "Are my children learning that having fun means buying things? My husband and I don't have a lot of time to spend with the kids, and the time we do have, we're often at the mall."

Children watch the decisions their parents

make about their furnishings, their cars, and their clothes and accessories.

While too young to articulate it, on every trip to

Are you teaching your kids that having fun means buying things?

the mall, Samantha's 10-year-old son was observing the time his mom gave to purchasing things versus the time she gave to her relationships. Samantha was right to question what her son was learning.

"I've heard it said that people spend for who we want to be, not who we really are," says Denise, mother of three, who tries to be intentional about leading a lifestyle simpler than she and her lawyer husband, Arthur, might be able to afford to give their three children.

"So many adults see nothing odd about a new dress for every occasion, a new car every two years, a new phone with every upgrade, new restaurants to try, new gyms to join," she says. "It is hard to tell a kid they are loved for who they are—and not what they own—if we as parents are still spending our money on a chance at acceptance."

For Denise and Arthur, faith drives their decision not to overspend. "Christianity gives us a great head start on rejecting materialism because of our

belief in God's love and acceptance for us," she says. "If we're clued in to this grace, we're most likely to surround ourselves with friends who don't charge admittance for acceptance." She says she hopes her kids "see the peace of being, and not buying."

In order to help children lean away from materialism and toward a life of purpose and meaning, parents need to be thoughtful about how they respond to their children's requests.

Fill the need, not the brand name. When Maureen's daughter wanted boots that cost about \$200 a pair, Maureen found a similar pair at a local discount store for about \$25.

"I told my daughter that I would buy the \$25 boots, because I recognized she needed boots," she says. "But if she wanted the brand name ones, she could put my \$25 toward those boots and make up the difference herself. She chose the less expensive boots."

Give it time. Nancy, mother of two, has noticed that simply putting a day in between the child's request and the parent's response decreases the urgency of the request. "Addie constantly wants the newest app and, of course, not the free ones," Nancy says. "I ask her if she will want it as badly tomorrow as she seems to want it today. Many times, a day of waiting makes her realize it's not that big of a deal."

Redefine wealth. Brigid and Bob, parents of four, verbalize to their children how much the family has, in this way: "We often remind our children that we are very rich indeed; we have everything that money can't buy: good health and healthy relationships." **USC**

By Annemarie Scobey. This article appears in the April issue of At Home with Our Faith, Claretian Publications' family spirituality newsletter (homefaith.com).



First hand account

Thomas, judged deficient because he doubts the story told by the other disciples of encountering the resurrected Jesus, stands as an antihero in the Gospel of John (20:24-29). His failure to believe because he has not seen expresses the evangelist's concern for his community now and future generations to come.

How Thomas came to be gone "that first day of the week" is unclear. His argument, "Unless I see the mark of the nails... and put my hand into his side," suggests that he cannot be accountable for

what happened in his absence. At times, the international response to the many conflicts that ravage our world feels the same. (As I write this, Syria is on the top of the media story heap.)

Thomas' incredulity melts away when he touches Jesus and acclaims him, "my Lord and my God!" Today, unless we witness firsthand the death, destruction, and injury being wrought; unless the hunger, spilled blood, and grief is ours, we all too often dicker over its severity, even its reality.

Thomas, who failed to come to belief through bonds of friendship, might encourage an isolationist argument while Rome burns and Syria continues to disintegrate and belief passes us by. **USC**

Image: "The Incredulity of Thomas" in *The Grandisson Psalter* (detail), 1275. Ink, pigments, gold on vellum. The British Library Board, ADD.21926 f23r

By Jerry Bleem, O.F.M., a priest and artist who teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

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